

THE PLACE OF GOD

IN

THE THOUGHT OF

GAERIEL MARCEL

A thesis presented for the  
degree of Doctor of Philosophy in French  
in the University of Canterbury,  
Christchurch, New Zealand

by

J.J. Benefield

1973

## THE PLACE OF GOD IN THE THOUGHT OF GABRIEL MARCEL

A thesis presented for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in French  
in the University of Canterbury, Christchurch, New Zealand, 1973,  
by J.J. Benefield.

### ABSTRACT

In common with other philosophers of existence, Gabriel Marcel is deeply concerned about life as it affects the individual in his situation-in-the-world. Marcel's uniqueness stems from his attitude to the meaning of life. His whole philosophy can be summed up as the expression of an option : that life can have a positive meaning. This can be appreciated, he asserts, if life is seen in a theocentric perspective which is itself possible only when the "sacral" character of life is recognized. Marcel suggests that this recognition will lead to the awareness by man of his situation as a being participating in the overall Mystery of Being.

The basis of his metaphysics is an ontology of participation on three interconnective levels : of sensation (the self), of communion (others), and of transcendence (union with God). While he insists on the individual's freedom to accept or reject this option, Marcel's "concrete" philosophy of existence is revealed as an "applied theocentrism". This theocentric orientation is at the heart of his three "concrete" approaches to the mystery of being - fidelity, hope and love - which, because they are directed towards and grounded in God, are shown to be philosophical translations of the three "theological" virtues - faith, hope and charity. According to Marcel's dialectic, man's consideration of self leads to the awareness of his ontological status as creature dependent on God as Creator. In his relations with others the individual is led to acknowledge that the ground and guarantee of all I-thou relationships is God as Absolute Thou. Finally, man's aspiration to transcendence is sublimated in union with God; this possible union involves the question of survival after death, which Marcel postulates in the immortality of fidelity in the sustained presence of those who have loved and who have been loved.

The conclusion reached is that Marcel's dialectic is an attempt at an "applied theocentrism" so that not only is God central in Marcel's thought but Being is identifiable with God, in the manner in which Marcel understands these terms. The Mystery of Being is seen as the ontological counterpart of the Mystery of God. The "need" (exigence) for being is translated, in the terms of Marcel's metaphysics, into the need for God. The fundamental option on the ontological plane, to be or not to be, is to be understood as the counterpart of the real fundamental option in Marcel's dialectic of the meaning of life, to believe or not to believe in God.

Throughout the thesis, certain deficiencies in Marcel's writings are pointed out. These include an excessive religious element, traces of literary dilettantism and elitism, the aphoristic nature of many of his pronouncements, his reluctance to give rational grounds for these statements, his evasiveness in that he glosses too readily over awkward questions and avoids giving any firm indication of his definitive position. These deficiencies outweigh his more positive contributions to a philosophy of existence, albeit a Christian philosophy of existence, so that his propaedeutics to a metaphysics of being remains a propaedeutics.

B  
2430  
M25  
B464  
1973

# C O N T E N T S

Introduction . . . . .	5
CHAPTER ONE : <u>The Works of Gabriel Marcel</u> . . . . .	10
Part I. The Philosopher of the Threshold	
i. Marcel resists classification . . . . .	11
ii. Marcel's theatre . . . . .	12
iii. The philosopher of the threshold . . . . .	15
Part II. Marcel's Philosophy	
i. General outline . . . . .	17
ii. Re-establishing the "sacral" character of life . . . . .	18
iii. The main stages of Marcel's philosophy of being . . . . .	21
Part III. An examination of Marcel's philosophy of being . . . . .	25
CHAPTER TWO : <u>The problem of God</u> . . . . .	42
Part I. Man in a World-without-God. God as Problem	
i. Background . . . . .	43
ii. Marcel's views on contemporary irreligion . . . . .	43
iii. Marcel and the Death-of-God school as represented by Nietzsche and Sartre . . . . .	47
Part II. Towards the Rediscovery of God. God as Mystery	
i. Approaches to a renewal of religion . . . . .	48
ii. Marcel's own approach to the "problem" of God . . . . .	52
iii. Marcel's method. Preliminary investigations into the nature of Thought :	
A. Primary and Secondary Reflection . . . . .	53
B. Problem and Mystery . . . . .	57
Part III. The Religious Element in Marcel's Ontology	
i. In his terminology . . . . .	59
ii. Marcel's use of negative theology . . . . .	61
Conclusion . . . . .	62
CHAPTER THREE : <u>God Is</u> . . . . .	73
Part I. Marcel and the classical "proofs" of God's existence	
i. Marcel's attitude . . . . .	74
ii. Marcel's position . . . . .	76



Part II. Marcel's dialectic aligned	
i. Participation and reflection . . . . .	78
ii. Hyperphenomenology . . . . .	79
iii. Presence . . . . .	81
iv. "Disponibilité" . . . . .	85
v. Grace . . . . .	86
vi. Invocation . . . . .	87
Part III. God and Being	
i. Enlightenment on the mystery of God . . . . .	89
ii. Towards the presence of God . . . . .	91
Conclusion . . . . .	92

#### CHAPTER FOUR : Affirmation (Faith) . . . . . 103

i. The fundamental option : to believe or not to believe . . . . .	104
ii. Freedom, grace, and sin . . . . .	106
iii. Thought on faith and the Act of Faith . . . . .	109
iv. "Bad faith", (a) atheism, (b) fideism . . . . .	112
v. Faith as response : (a) the trials of life . . . . .	118
(b) the example of others' faith . . . . .	120
(c) faith and love . . . . .	122
(d) faith in communication - prayer . . . . .	123
Conclusion : Faith transmuted into Fidelity . . . . .	125

#### CHAPTER FIVE : Attestation (Creative Fidelity in Hope and Love) . . . . . 139

Part I. Fidelity as Witness	
i. Establishing the quality of commitment . . . . .	141
ii. Fidelity is creative . . . . .	142
iii. Concrete examples from Marcel's theatre . . . . .	145
Part II. Hope and Love	
i. Marcel : traditionalist but contemporary . . . . .	150
ii. The central position of hope in Marcel's metaphysics . . . . .	151
iii. Hope is necessary to combat despair . . . . .	152
iv. From salutary "despair" to absolute hope . . . . .	153
v. Towards a phenomenological description of hope . . . . .	154
vi. Properties of intersubjective hope . . . . .	156
vii. "I hope in Thee for us" . . . . .	159

viii. Prayer as inspired by hope and love . . . . .	160
ix. A "prophetic assurance" . . . . .	161
x. Witness in intersubjective communion . . . . .	162
Conclusion . . . . .	162
 CHAPTER SIX : <u>Ultimate Union</u> (Death and Immortality) . . . . .	173
Part I. The Place of Death in a Philosophy of Being	
i. Marcel and other contemporary "existential" thinkers	174
ii. Marcel's initial investigations into an ontology of death . . . . .	175
iii. Towards the possible transcendence of death . . . . .	177
Part II. Immortality - the transcendence of death and guarantee of ultimate union	
i. Application of the concrete approaches to the ontological mystery . . . . .	181
ii. Examples from Marcel's theatre . . . . .	185
iii. "Disponibilité" and disposability (of the body) - the martyr as witness of immortality . . . . .	186
iv. Joyous confidence in the immortality of love . . . . .	188
v. Faith and hope for resurrection and salvation . . . . .	190
Conclusion . . . . .	194
 CONCLUSION . . . . .	205
 Appendix 1. Marcel, Aquinas and Augustine . . . . .	212
A. Marcel and Aquinas . . . . .	212
B. Marcel and Augustine . . . . .	216
Appendix 2. More detailed résumés of Marcel's plays which illustrate philosophical insights presented in the thesis . . . . .	223
I. The primary ontological question . . . . .	223
II. Towards ontological communion . . . . .	225
III. The salvific properties of openness to the influence of grace . . . . .	227
IV. Suffering and Death . . . . .	231
 BIBLIOGRAPHY : A. Primary Sources . . . . .	243
B. Secondary Sources . . . . .	245
C. Tertiary Sources . . . . .	248
Index . . . . .	251

## INTRODUCTION

Malgré nos efforts le problème de la transcendance divine se pose inévitablement; quoi que nous en ayons, il ne semble pas possible que l'intellectualisme puisse arriver à fonder la réalité de Dieu sur une conception élargie et dynamique de l'individualité. Dans l'intellectualisme Dieu n'existe jamais que pour le philosophe; or c'est ce que nous ne voulons pas; une religion purement philosophique ne saurait être vraie.

- G. MARCEL, Fragments philosophiques, 16.

Among the names of thinkers who are commonly listed as belonging to the French school of existentialism that of Gabriel Marcel is often relegated to one side and promptly overlooked if not forgotten. Marcel himself makes no protest against any such oversight because he dissociates himself from the contemporary brand of existential thought. His repudiation of the label "existentialist" would seem to lend support to the view, currently held by those unfamiliar with this style of philosophizing, that all existential philosophy inevitably involves atheism. In fact, however, Marcel repudiates any label. Notwithstanding his aversion to classification, we may safely say that he is a theistic philosopher of existence. The aim of this thesis is to determine the place of God and the role of religious thought in his work, principally in his philosophical treatises.

In the first chapter a review is made of his works as a whole, for Marcel is both a dramatist and a philosopher. The close correlation of his theatre to his philosophical insights will be indicated where relevant in the ensuing chapters and an appendix provided of illustrations in his plays of aspects of his "concrete" philosophy. In common with other philosophers of existence, Marcel is deeply concerned about life, an interest which extends from his first published notes to the last lines of his latest treatise.<sup>1</sup> His uniqueness stems from his attitude towards the meaning of life.

His whole philosophy can be summed up as the expression of an option, namely that life can have a positive meaningfulness. Such a meaning to life, he asserts, can be appreciated if life is seen in a theocentric perspective of consecration. His approach is made through a renewed ontology of participation on three interconnective levels of sensation (the self), of communion (others), and of transcendence (union with God). The last section of the first chapter will deal with Marcel's interpretation of "being". This is an important consideration because it is my contention that Marcel's concept of Being is such that it can be identified with God, so that God must be central in Marcel's whole ontology.

The "need" (exigence) for being is translated, on the metaphysical level, to the need for God. The second chapter treats of Marcel's views on contemporary irreligion and his suggestions (pre-Vatican II) for a religious renewal. Investigations into a renewal, on the philosophical plane, of the nature of reflection - which he divides into two disciplines, "primary" and "secondary" - are paralleled on the plane of natural theology by a further distinction, between problem and mystery. The Mystery of Being is seen as the ontological counterpart of the Mystery of God. A critical examination is made of Marcel's religious terminology and his use of theology, both natural and negative.

In the third chapter I proceed to a consideration of Marcel's dissatisfaction with the classical "proofs" of God's existence and, correspondingly, of his own approach within the framework of metaphysics. This involves his

very personal notion of "presence" by means of which he arrives at an analogical inference of God. A further consideration of the extent of Marcel's misunderstanding of Aquinas, together with his affinity to Augustine, is the subject of the first of the two appendices.

The affirmation of God is the subject of the fourth chapter, the key chapter of the thesis. The fundamental option on the ontological plane, to be or not to be, is to be understood as the counterpart of the real fundamental option in Marcel's dialectic of the meaning of life, to believe or not to believe in God. Marcel's discussions of those areas which he sees as encompassed by faith are accordingly subjected to critical examination. Principal among these is his one-sided view of the non-believer's "idea of God". Other topics include his treatment of atheism, fideism, and the question of evil and suffering.

In line with his "concrete" philosophy, the later Marcel (after his conversion to Catholicism) becomes more interested in the witness to faith through fidelity. The fifth chapter deals with Marcel's phenomenological analyses of what he calls the "concrete approaches" to the "ontological mystery" - fidelity, hope and love. Because these are all directed towards and grounded in God, they are shown to be philosophical translations of the three theological virtues - faith, hope and charity. Prominence is given to his study of hope, the presentation of which distinguishes Marcel from his contemporaries and reveals the basis of his option against "absurdisme".

The ultimate goal towards which tends his metaphysics of hope, based on faith in God, and inspired by love, is final fulfilment (the "pleroma"). In the sixth chapter I examine Marcel's argument for the possible transcendence of death. For Marcel, this proposition entails the postulation of immortality. Criticism is made of Marcel's inadequate answers to the questions of survival after death and the nature of personal resurrection.

The conclusion reached is that Marcel's dialectic is an attempt at an "applied theocentrism" in the tradition of the Fathers of the Church, that God is therefore central in Marcel's thought and that Being is identifiable with God, in the manner in which Marcel understands these terms. However, throughout the thesis and again in the conclusion, certain deficiencies in Marcel's writings are pointed out. These include an excessive religious element, traces of literary dilettantism and elitism, the aphoristic nature of many of his pronouncements, his reluctance to give rational grounds for these statements, his evasiveness in that he glosses too readily over awkward questions and avoids giving any firm indication of his definitive position. These deficiencies outweigh his more positive contributions to a philosophy of existence, albeit a Christian philosophy of existence, so that, as is pointed out quite early in the thesis, his propaedeutics to a metaphysics of being remains a propaedeutics.

Because of their number and length, the references are given en bloc immediately after each chapter. Besides the appendices already mentioned, a bibliography is provided; this is subdivided into three sections : primary, secondary and tertiary sources.

#### FOOTNOTE TO THE INTRODUCTION

1. In Marcel's first recorded entry (22nd June 1909) he writes: "Si la vie a un sens, ce ne peut être à coup sûr que celui-ci: réduire tout ce qui en nous est nature à n'être que l'expression voulue et consciente de cette pensée éternelle ("Rien n'est hors de l'éternelle subjectivité"); hors de la pas de moralité" (FP 16). His very next entry (4th July), concerns the affirmation of God and is given as epigraph to this Introduction. It may be objected that this book, Fragments philosophiques, is a selected collection of his earliest notes and was not published until 1961. It is interesting, in that case, to observe that the opening words of his first published work, Journal métaphysique, are : "Il y a un plan où non seulement le monde n'a pas de sens, mais où il est même contradictoire de poser la question de savoir s'il en a un" (JM 3, 1st Jan. 1914). The concluding sentence of his most recent published treatise, Pour une Sagesse tragique (1968), points to his hope for a "better world"; he considers that "la véritable sagesse consiste à s'aventurer, prudemment certes, mais avec une sorte de frémissement heureux, sur les chemins qui conduisent, je ne dis pas hors du temps, mais hors de notre temps, là où les technocrates et les statisticiens d'une part, les inquisiteurs et les bourreaux de l'autre, non seulement perdent pied, mais s'évanouissent comme les fumées au lever d'un beau jour" (ST 309-310).

#### ABBREVIATIONS USED IN THE SCRIPT

CA :	<u>la Chapelle ardente</u>
CdC :	<u>le Chemin de crête</u>
DH :	<u>la Dignité humaine</u>
EA :	<u>Etre et avoir</u> (2 vols)
EPC :	<u>Essai de philosophie concrète</u>
FdT :	<u>la Fin des temps</u>
FP :	<u>Fragments philosophiques</u>
HCH :	<u>les Hommes contre l'humain</u>
HdD :	<u>Un Homme de Dieu</u>
HP :	<u>Homme problématique</u>
HV :	<u>Homo Viator</u>
JM :	<u>Journal métaphysique</u>
MC :	<u>le Monde cassé</u>
MdD :	<u>le Mort de demain</u>
ME :	<u>le Mystère de l'Etre</u> (2 vols)
MR :	<u>la Métaphysique de Royce</u>
MTNPLV :	<u>Mon Temps n'est pas le vôtre</u>
PACMO :	<u>Position et approches concrètes du mystère ontologique</u>

PdS :	<u>le Palais de sable</u>
PE :	<u>The Philosophy of Existentialism</u>
PI :	<u>Présence et immortalité</u>
PR-GM :	<u>Entretiens Paul Ricoeur - Gabriel Marcel</u>
PT :	<u>Paix sur la terre</u>
RPR :	<u>Rome n'est plus dans Rome</u>
SC :	<u>le Signe de la croix</u>
Schg :	<u>Searchings</u>
SdI :	<u>le Secret est dans les îles</u>
ST :	<u>Pour une Sagesse tragique et son au-delà</u>
TM :	Troisfontaines' work on Marcel (2 vols)
TR :	<u>Théâtre et religion</u>

## CHAPTER ONE

THE WORKS OF GABRIEL MARCEL

Lorsque je tente de considérer (mon développement philosophique) dans son ensemble, je suis forcé de constater qu'il a été dominé par deux préoccupations qui peuvent d'abord sembler contradictoires, et dont l'une s'est d'abord traduite beaucoup plus directement dans mon oeuvre dramatique que dans mes essais spéculatifs, l'autre s'exprimant dans le registre métaphysique, mais restant présente au moins à l'arrière-plan de toutes mes pièces, quelles qu'elles soient. Celle-ci, c'est ce que j'appellerai l'exigence de l'être; celle-là, c'est la hantise des êtres saisis dans leur singularité et en même temps atteints dans les mystérieux rapports qui les lient.

- G. MARCEL, Essai de philosophie concrète,  
220-221.



## I. The Philosopher of the Threshold.

### i. Marcel resists classification

While it is convenient to categorize philosophers according to their adhesion to or sympathy with a particular school of thought, this procedure cannot be applied so easily to Gabriel Marcel.<sup>1</sup> Although credited with introducing the term "existentialism", into the vocabulary of French philosophy at least, he himself has, since 1950, repudiated with uncharacteristic vehemence any attempt to classify him as an existentialist or even as a "Catholic" writer.<sup>2</sup> He prefers to call himself a philosopher of existence. But, if he must be identified by his philosophical attitude, Marcel has expressed no serious objection to the label "neo-Socratic" (first applied, it would appear, by his former pupil Joseph Chenu). Indeed in his later years he has liked to describe his method or approach as "heuristic" or "maieutic".<sup>3</sup> By entering into discussion with his readers, he proposes to bring forth "the child of eternity"<sup>4</sup>, not by aggressive proselytizing but by casting new light on familiar experiences and in that way to lead them to the "threshold" of conversion.<sup>5</sup>

Marcel's "philosophical catholicity", when reinforced by his aversion to formulating conclusions, makes it very difficult to evaluate his contribution not only to a general philosophy of existence but also to constructing a viable metaphysical framework within which to elucidate the ultimate meaning of Being. Nevertheless, I hope to show that, through his phenomenological analyses of experience and interpersonal relationships, Marcel demonstrates the logic of a natural theology. From the analogue of the self one may move to the affirmation of a transcendent, personal integrator<sup>6</sup> whom Marcel calls the Absolute Thou. The intention of his philosophy is to lead, by an application of the mutual I-thou relationship, to an enlightened awareness by man that he is destined to achieve eternal, inseparable communion with Being. It can be construed, in religious terms, as an attempt to show that man's eternal orientation lies in God. In this thesis I propose to investigate the centrality of God in Marcel's thought as expressed in his work, both philosophical and dramatic, and to determine how far Marcel's concept of Being can be identified with the Christian notion of God.

In order to show that the place of God in Marcel's thought is inherently central, a review of his principal themes is necessary. Without such a presentation any isolated study of one aspect would be unintelligible.<sup>7</sup> It is as difficult, however, to present a well-ordered resume of his philosophical thought as it would be to attempt a systematic schema. The difficulty arises from the diffusive range of his interests<sup>8</sup> and the

interrelation of his major themes. His philosophy may be likened to an intricate tapestry of ideas and insights in which his central themes are so intimately interwoven that to extricate one thread would draw out several others with it. Thus, in following out the stages of a particular moment of his dialectic, certain notions may reappear, whose relevance serves to emphasize the "contrapuntal" harmony of his whole thought.<sup>9</sup>

Any confusion as to what exactly is Marcel's standpoint on any philosophical issue stems, in part at least, from his peculiar methodology which is, in fact, unmethodological. This disregard for philosophical conventions results in an elusiveness which Gallagher considers is essential to Marcel's thought. Any attempt to eliminate it, Gallagher claims, would be self-defeating.<sup>10</sup> Marcel had originally intended to produce a comprehensive summa philosophiae but, as he turned away from his idealist training, he came to realize that that ambition would never, and could never, be fulfilled.<sup>11</sup> He holds that systematization tends to exploit and manipulate one's thoughts. This, he charges, produces an arbitrary and, at times, an artificial division. In the realm of metaphysics - to which, for him, the all-important question of being relates - any attempt to systematize one's thoughts is to debase them. Furthermore, he told Paul Ricoeur, it is impossible to place oneself at a central point of view which should be God's alone :

il y avait là une prétention qui me semblait tout à fait incompatible avec notre statut de créature. (12)

## ii. Marcel's theatre

### (a) An integral part of his work.

Because Marcel sets such store by his dramatic writing, it is both necessary and helpful to see how far it constitutes an integral part of his work.

Marcel ascribes his sense of the tragic from his earliest years to a feeling of unmerited guilt accruing from his suspicion that his father and aunt had married on his account.<sup>13</sup> It would appear that the young Marcel's theatrical bent had bolstered him during his lonely childhood which he peopled with imaginary characters.<sup>14</sup> When, in later years, he continued to write plays, he considered them at first to be independent of his philosophical work. It was not long, however, before he realized that the separation was illusory. The lines of enquiry expressed in the concrete situations of his plays were seen by him to find metaphysical embodiment in approaches no less concrete in his later philosophical writings. Unconsciously, he declares, he had been actualizing his basic tendency to

combine his philosophical investigations with his theatrical creations.<sup>15</sup>

To clarify the relation between his theatre and his philosophy, Gabriel Marcel compares his whole work to a country like Greece which is partly continental and partly insular. The continental area represents his philosophical work, the insular his theatre. The secret, he asserts, lies in the islands.<sup>16</sup> Dramatic art, as he understands it, is the representation of persons engaged in concrete situations, the development of which he follows in union with the spectators. He makes the rather curious claim that he does not oblige his characters to conform to a pre-arranged plan. This does not mean that he allows the actors to extemporize; what he is claiming is that as he wrote his plays his characters somehow tended to give voice to insights which he himself as the author had not decided upon in advance. Often, he assures us, he has been surprised by these revelatory insights. It is on this that he bases his claim that his plays can be called truly existential.<sup>17</sup> More realistically, we may be inclined to take as his meaning that when he saw his plays performed he gained fresh insights into his own writing.

It follows that his theatre is quite often disquieting. No dramatist worthy of the name, Marcel declares, should provide only those palliatives that calm and satisfy.<sup>18</sup> Marcel's plays ask necessary, albeit awkward, questions about life and being. He explains that if he did not pose these questions he should be suspicious of himself as trying to build a comfortable refuge in such philosophical thoughts which neglected the tragic and disturbing aspects of concrete existence. He designates his theatre as the Drama of the Soul in Exile. For him, the soul in exile is the soul which has become a stranger to itself, which can no longer understand itself, which has lost its way.<sup>19</sup> He differs from other existential playwrights in that while his plays often end on a tragic question-mark (e.g. Un Homme de Dieu) - he does not presume to offer neat solutions to all human problems - he does not, for all that, leave one with only the inevitability of despair.<sup>20</sup> His characters give us the impression that they can still extricate themselves from situations not always of their own making - provided they respond to various appeals from varying sources.<sup>21</sup> Marcel claims that this awareness can be experienced by the audience as well as by the characters directly involved in the dramatic action. In this light Marcel's theatre could be described as one of participation.<sup>22</sup>

(b) "Artistic" expression in Marcel's work.

One of the criticisms levelled at Marcel is that he allows art and literature to intrude into his philosophy. We have just noted that he claims a close connection between his theatrical works and his philosophical writings. He does not, however, propose to use the former as a vehicle to

propagate his metaphysical insights. The Thomists as a group deny that poetic insight has a direct bearing upon a theoretical discipline like metaphysics. One of Marcel's more favourably disposed Thomist critics, Jacques Maritain, reproves him on this score. According to Maritain, Marcel's literary analyses give only concrete analogues to metaphysical truths; they do not attain to the formal and theoretical attitude necessary for speculative enquiry.

This is an interesting objection and one which seems justified. In view of the fact that my aim is to ascertain the place of God in Marcel's whole creative output (the theatrical illustrating the philosophical), it is necessary to consider what Marcel has to say on the subject.

Contrary to his critics, Marcel holds that there is a correspondence and an ultimate convergence between metaphysical enquiry and artistic representation. Furthermore, he even quotes Maritain to substantiate his argument :

Je demeure persuadé que c'est dans le drame et à travers le drame que la pensée métaphysique se saisit elle-même et se définit in concreto. M. Jacques Maritain, dans une conférence faite à Louvain, il y a un ou deux ans [Marcel is writing in 1933], sur le Problème de la Philosophie Chrétienne, disait : 'Rien n'est plus facile pour une philosophie que d'être tragique, elle n'a qu'à s'abandonner à son poids humain', allusion sans doute aux spéculations d'un Heidegger. (23)

His reason for quoting Maritain is that he, Marcel, believes that this is precisely where Maritain and other critics of an existential theatre are mistaken. The natural trend of philosophy, as interpreted by Idealists for example, leads into a sphere where tragedy has simply vanished, "volatisé au contact de la pensée abstraite". Marcel will not acquiesce in the banishment of the tragic factors of human existence to "je ne sais quel principe anonyme d'intériorité pure". This attitude, he retorts, is associated with the rejection of the ontological need and is one which he strives to combat. It is through a consideration of the concrete examples of all factors of human existence, with its joys and its sorrows, its problems and its mysteries, that Marcel claims it is possible to gain some intelligible notion of the meaning of life, of man's status aspiring to ultimate communion in transcendence. As he sees it, this is what his whole work is about and must be seen in its totality.

Lorsqu'on prendra la peine - et il faut reconnaître que ce sera là une tâche très malaisée - d'étudier mon oeuvre dans sa totalité, on sera amené à reconnaître non seulement que certains thèmes centraux comme celui de la 'Fidélité Créatrice' apparaissent en pleine lumière dans les pièces, mais aussi qu'un grand nombre de celles-ci, comme je l'ai déjà indiqué, constituent ce qu'il faudrait peut-être appeler les amorçages existentiels de toute une thématique dont je suis certainement très loin d'avoir épuisé les richesses dans mes écrits philosophiques. (24)

For his part, Marcel continues to uphold his defence of the use of literary devices in his phenomenological descriptions and analyses. He is quite prepared to resort to quasi-mystical and quasi-theological expressions besides indulging in lyrical outpourings. Furthermore, he is inclined to think that more often than not a truer appreciation of the human condition and of man's destiny is to be found in the poets.<sup>25</sup> It is through literature, he states, that we can gain some understanding of the great mysteries of life. He goes so far as to allege that if ever the harmony between death and resurrection, for example, is to be discovered, it will be by some poet of humble origins who has not read the works of the popular ("progressive") philosophers, but who will be granted some special grace to give voice to that Idea which all poets feel as an inner urge.<sup>26</sup>

It does appear, then, that on the score of literary profusions in his philosophical works, Marcel's critics are justified. Marcel sets considerable store by poets and artists, placing them at least on the same level as philosophers. Moreover, he seems to favour an eclectic and elitist society of intellectuals, of the type favoured by Plato, in which would be vested the responsibility for interpreting not only metaphysics but ethics as well. Elements of elitism in Marcel's thought will be indicated where they appear in the course of the thesis.

### iii. The Philosopher of the Threshold (conversion and reaction)

Marcel's whole philosophy can be seen as a study of interpersonal relationships directed towards an appreciation of man's condition as creature in communion with others and in dependence on God. He describes the condition of man as that of the traveller, "homo viator, l'homme en marche"<sup>27</sup>. He identifies as man's goal the "light of truth" which, in final analysis is "the Light which comes into the world and which enlightens every man who comes into the world"<sup>28</sup>. But man will be enlightened only if he first crosses "the threshold of conversion", and this step involves a major decision. From his own experience Marcel claims that he can appreciate the difficulties encountered by those who are still groping towards the "light of truth".

Ce voyage, je ne le regrette pas; cela pour maintes raisons, mais surtout parce que j'en garde un souvenir assez présent pour vouer une sympathie particulière à tous ceux qui sont eux-mêmes en voyage, et qui cheminent parfois péniblement sur des pistes analogues à celles que j'ai suivies moi-même. (29)

On account of the very strong religious element in his philosophy, we may think that Marcel would show his gratitude for having been given the grace of conversion by assisting those who would approach the

threshold. His rôle, he believes, is to show the way but, because, as he claims, all forms of proselytizing are abhorrent to him, he leaves to them the decisive step across the threshold. He sees himself as a latter-day Pylades stretching out his hands on the other side in encouragement, or as a spokesman, well-equipped by experience, for both believers and unbelievers.

Je me considère comme ayant été toujours un philosophe du seuil, un philosophe qui se tenait, d'une manière assez inconfortable d'ailleurs, sur une ligne médiane entre les croyants et les non-croyants, de façon à pouvoir en quelque sorte m'adresser aux croyants, m'adresser à la religion chrétienne, à la religion catholique, mais de manière à pouvoir parler aux non-croyants, à pouvoir me faire comprendre d'eux et peut-être à les aider. (30)

From what Marcel tells us, his family background was not one of unconsciously nurtured religion. It would seem to have been almost calculated to arouse an aversion to any form of spirituality, and certainly to Catholicism.<sup>31</sup> His interest in the nature of religion must have been awakened when he began his studies in philosophy. During his investigations into the question of faith and belief in God, he discovered that the same question intruded into other spheres of his research. It was only years later, he claims, that he realized that his preliminary considerations into the relationships of the self and the body were leading to the Incarnate God, the God who conferred existence on himself when he became man.<sup>32</sup> At the time he wrote his thesis, in 1909, Marcel chose as his epigraph these words of Hugh of St. Victor :

To rise to God is to go inside ourselves; and not only that, but to the very depth of our self, transcending ourselves. (33)

Twenty years later Gabriel Marcel could be said to have acceded to this approach to God which is as much of the order of metaphysical enquiry as it is of conversion.

For Marcel, the initiating impulse to man's recognition of the Fellowship of Being ("the ontological communion") is an invitation, or as he terms it, an "appeal". Actual communion becomes effective with the response to the appeal. Marcel declares that he received his appeal in a postscript to a letter from Francois Mauriac. He assures us that this appeal ("Pourquoi ne venez-vous pas nous rejoindre?") served as a catalyst to crystallize the resolve which had been prepared by his openness to respond. His eventual conversion and baptism, he insists, were not a break with the past nor with his Protestant friends (his wife and her family were devout Protestants), but rather the accomplishment and almost the conclusion of thoughts which had been developing in him for years.<sup>34</sup> He admits that he cannot explain why he chose Catholicism; perhaps he saw in it a more clearly defined "organic reality".<sup>35</sup> The important thing, as far as he is concerned, is that he was

converted. Later he can point to elements of Christian (i.e. Catholic) tradition that serve to confirm, in a theological register, his own philosophical insights. A conversion worthy of the name, he wrote with convenient hindsight more than thirty years afterwards, is an absolutely sincere and spontaneous conversion at the heart of an individual.

Le converti répondra en effet : je n'ai pas trouvé [a solution to, or remedy for, my difficulties], j'ai été trouvé; en d'autres termes, il répondra très justement que tout s'explique ou plus exactement s'éclaire par la grâce et par le fait qu'à cette grâce il ne s'est tout simplement pas refusé. (36)

According to Marcel, the proper return for the gift of faith is humble gratitude by which we return thanks for our enjoyment of being. The object of our thanks should be the Giver and Source of all being, the "cement" of the communion of beings in the most profound dimension of Being.<sup>37</sup> Gabriel Marcel believes that, whatever may be our shortcomings and omissions, we have to recollect with gratitude all that has been given to us by

une puissance qu'il ne me paraît pas nécessaire de nommer.<sup>38</sup>

In the final section of this chapter I propose to show that this "power" is a Christianized version of Plato's Being ("Being is power" <sup>39</sup>). Throughout the course of the thesis I intend to see how far Marcel's God is a personal God, not just a supra-temporal abstraction as the term "Being" may imply.

## II. Marcel's Philosophy.

### i. General outline

Marcel considers his whole philosophical effort as directed towards a re-birth of life in certain areas of the mind's activity which seem to be falling into torpor or even into decay.<sup>40</sup> While expressing his concern about man's ambiguous situation in the world - that man is finite yet attracted to the infinite - he does not allow himself to succumb to the fatalistic anguish-dread of some existentialist thinkers. There is, for Marcel, a positive value in anguish. He describes the form of anguish-uneasiness which he experiences as not derived from man's finite condition but occasioned by the environmental state of affairs.<sup>41</sup> The blame for this, in his view, is to be laid, in some part, at the door of a "science fetishism"<sup>42</sup> which leads to anthropocentrism, a Promethean defiance of God, and ultimately to Sartrean self-divinization. Without recourse to any transcendental values, man, according to Marcel, would have no other alternative than despair.

Marcel inveighs, perhaps too singlemindedly at times, against the contemporary "techniques of degradation" which he sees as having reached a

high level of sophistication under totalitarian regimes.<sup>43</sup> He ascribes the blame for this tendency of alienation, in great part, to an inordinate self-sufficiency engendered and fostered by a "philosophy of applied science". By this he means a philosophy of life grounded on the belief of man's supremacy in all fields of knowledge and endeavour because of technological progress.<sup>44</sup> As a consequence of this outlook there has been, in his words, a parallel loss of a sense of human dignity and a "drop in the price of life".<sup>45</sup> Life itself would seem to be rendered meaningless, precisely because it has become "desacralized".<sup>46</sup>

ii. Re-establishing the "sacral" character of life

Marcel asserts that what is needed to offset this danger is for a positive meaning to be attributed to life so that it does not degenerate into "a tale told by an idiot".<sup>47</sup> Marcel denies that "life" is a pure abstraction; for him, life is an unspecifiable ensemble of experiences in which the human "existent" and his situation are inextricably involved. Life for man should be more dynamic than existing in a pure vegetative state. Marcel tries to establish a distinction between active and passive existence :

Ce n'est pas sur la vie, mais sur le vivant, sur l'être vivant que l'attention doit se centrer. (48)

What is needed, he insists, is not a biological explanation but an "axiological" consideration :

c'est-à-dire laisser ouverte la question de savoir non seulement si la Vie est bonne ou mauvaise, mais bien plus profondément si cette question présente un sens quelconque. (49)

What has been lost and must be regained, Marcel proclaims, is a sense and appreciation of the "sacral" quality of life so that it is given fresh prominence in our contemporary "world of transition, a world of changing values".<sup>50</sup>

This "sacral" element, Marcel explains, has not necessarily anything to do with ritualism or religion in a technical sense; even unbelievers can experience it. Despite his suspicions of other thinkers' terms to convey some idea of this desired attitude, Marcel's own suggestion of "sacral" appears to be just as nebulous and intangible, if one is to seek for its definition.<sup>51</sup> He insists that the term has nothing to do with sentiment, but only suggests that it can be experienced through integrity, innocence, simplicity, honour, and wonderment or even adoration before life.<sup>52</sup> To help us appreciate the "sacral" element in life, Marcel offers his interpretation of religion as a realm where the subject is confronted with something which he cannot fully grasp by resorting to any kind of objective analysis. The subject can only make some gesture of recognition before the



"sacral".<sup>53</sup> Because the subject is so caught up in the awareness that the "sacral" element permeates his own life and therefore his very being, a true and proper consideration of the "sacral" is not only axiological but definitely ontological as well. This is to say that Marcel holds that the question of life can find its solution not only in meaning and value but in the awareness of being as well. Marcel asserts firmly :

Je dirai sans l'ombre d'une hésitation que l'ontologie elle-même n'est rien si elle n'est pas un retour aux sources et par là même au sacré. (54)

Following a phenomenological reflection which should show up the dualism of life as an experience to be lived and as an object for clinical examination, Marcel hopes that we shall accede to a realm of recollection<sup>55</sup> wherein we may be granted a more complete awareness of the sanctity of life. This awareness of the value of recollection characterizes the thought of the Fathers of the Church :

L'idée antique reprise et approfondie par les Pères de l'Eglise d'après laquelle la contemplation est l'activité la plus haute est une idée complètement perdue. (56)

Such a desired re-orientation of our thinking implies, for Marcel, a necessary "conversion". By this he means a movement by which the consciousness turns away from the oppressive spectacle of a technocratic view of the world. Marcel's "conversion" is a return to the consideration by the individual of his fundamental status as being. Marcel affirms that this basic ontological status of man is that of a creature, a created being. This necessary conversion is an "intro-version", or, as Marcel explains, an "ingatheredness" of our spiritual forces which will lead to the recognition of the individual. He proposes further that this "ingatheredness" is a free movement : it is not a restriction of the individual to himself, but is outgoing as well as inward-looking at the same time. True "ingatheredness" becomes a relationship of one individual to another, of an "I" to a "thou".<sup>57</sup> This, then, is the intersubjective sense of "conversion". It is not a subjectivist notion, for in the fusion of the "I" and "thou" in a "We", the separate individualities are maintained.

As a result of this kind of approach, Gabriel Marcel sees the whole question of life more as one of love than of value.<sup>58</sup> Through my love for the other I shall appreciate his value; I shall value life - my own and the other's - if first I love. This is the order of priority which Marcel urges should be established. According to this, I shall see that life is a benefaction; but more than a blessing or a curse, life should be regarded as a possibility, or more exactly an opportunity, for good or evil.<sup>59</sup> My life will be a chance for good, Marcel proclaims, once I break free of egocentrism and, through love, give expression to the appeal addressed to me by another. In this way,

Je suis cette réponse d'abord informe, mais qui peu à peu, à mesure qu'elle s'articulera, se connaîtra elle-même comme réponse et comme jugement; oui je suis irrésistiblement conduit à faire cette découverte que je porte moi-même un jugement, par le fait que je suis qui je suis, sur ceux qui m'ont introduit dans l'être; et du même coup, une infinité de rapports nouveaux se créent entre eux et moi. (60)

There is a need, Marcel asserts, in this century to renew the bond (he calls it the "nuptial" bond) between man and life.<sup>61</sup> Marcel's view of man is that he is not so much a collaborator with God<sup>62</sup> as a co-creator. Procreation should be seen as not just a biological function but as participation in creation. With that realization man will gain a truer "sacral" awareness of procreation once he understands that he is a mediator, a go-between, and not a sole agent. Life, Marcel affirms, will then be understood not as a biological phenomenon but as a gift. And as a gift demands a giver, we should become aware of the Creator, and consequently of our true ontological status as creature.<sup>63</sup>

Our reaction to that awareness, Marcel tells us, should be one of gratitude. Here, it will be noted, we return to the conclusion reached in the preceding section. There is a connection between the awareness of the gift of life in its physical sense and the awareness of a newness (a "rajeunissement") of life in the spiritual order. Marcel's authentic existent is a man of honour, and honour is closely linked with gratitude.<sup>64</sup> This gratitude will be dynamic, as life is dynamic, by being expressed as service. Conversely, "l'âme du service, c'est la générosité".<sup>65</sup> In this way, we infer from Marcel that life finds its solution in commitment. Life, he explains, is a service in the sense of "servir" more than of "servir à".<sup>66</sup> Accordingly, it may also be inferred from Marcel's interpretation that no life is truly creative except to the degree that it is consecrated. For it is by this consecration that the gift of life is made possible and given its value.<sup>67</sup> In Marcel's view it is of the essence that it be consecrated : to God or, on a lower level, to any high purpose or chosen social need. The importance of Marcel's insistence on the restoration of the "sacral" awareness of life as the expression of his option against "absurdisme" will be thrown into sharp relief in the concluding chapter of the thesis. For ultimately service means service of God :

Servir, dans tous les sens valables du mot, cela veut dire servir la vérité, et peut-être est-ce dans cette lumière qu'on peut apercevoir ce qu'est le service au sens absolu du mot, c'est-à-dire le service même de Dieu. (68)

### iii. The main stages of Marcel's dialectic of ontological participation

In order to consider the general dialectic of Marcel's philosophy of existence, or more correctly of his metaphysics of being, it is necessary to recall his statement,

Ce n'est pas sur la vie, mais sur le vivant, sur  
l'être vivant que l'attention doit se centrer. (69)

Marcel stresses that both "être" and "vivant" should be accorded equal emphasis. To be, he adds by way of explanation, is not simply to be in situ, but to be of value. In agreement with other existential thinkers, he holds that a life-existence is a continual process of becoming. This is what he means when he declares that man has to be, it is his responsibility to be.<sup>70</sup> By this he implies that the duty of the "authentic" existent is to fulfil himself in a process of continual activity or development of his potential. This "having-to-be" is the impulse of what Marcel calls the ontological need.

Il faut qu'il y ait - ou il faudrait qu'il y eût - de l'être,<sup>71</sup>  
Marcel proclaims in his famous pronouncement. We affirm being, he declares, simply because being is. But such an affirmation seems impossible since it is only when it is made that one can regard oneself as qualified to make it. In the play l'Emissaire Roger, when asked by Sylvie who he is, replies :

C'est la question à ne pas poser, celle qui ne comporte  
pas de réponse. Si je savais qui je suis, je pense que  
je n'existerais plus. (72)

According to Marcel, I cannot put myself in a privileged position to look at being because I am myself within it. This is the force of what he terms the "mystery of being" and serves to illustrate his distinction between mystery and problem.<sup>73</sup> Being wholly envelops the affirming subject :

L'être nous est immédiatement présent, mais nous  
ne lui sommes pas immédiatement présents. (74)

Closely related to this central notion of being in Marcel's dialectic is his interpretation of freedom. He shows his affinity with those contemporary thinkers who are existentialist or personalist by postulating that freedom is the fundamental characteristic of man. The "authentic" existent, in Marcel's view, has to recognize not only that he must be (that is, that he must become more fully by striving to realize his potential) but that he is free to determine the nature and direction of his development. This is what Marcel means when he asserts that being-man is to be understood as being-free. He affirms that these parallel "needs" of the authentic existent are established in the parallel formulae : "I am not, I have to be" and "I am not free, I have to become free."<sup>75</sup> This is to say that the existent is not truly authentic - he is not "engaged" in existence ("I am not") - until he recognizes that he needs to discover his true self and his abilities ("I have to be"). Thus the authentic existent will only be able

to live and act freely when he realizes the nature and scope of his freedom.

It is on this score that Marcel differs from some of his contemporaries. Contrary to Sartre, for example, Marcel holds that freedom is not an end in itself<sup>76</sup> but rather the motivating impulse which determines man's attitude to life. We are free, he declares, to accept or reject the notion that we participate in being only as creatures. This is the ontological import of the dichotomy between acceptance ("invocation") and rejection ("refus"), a dichotomy which is rooted in the spiritual order as much as in the order of "being". For Marcel suggests that a positive choice of freedom is valid only when it is elicited by grace so that man recognizes his ontological status as participating in being.<sup>77</sup> Only in this light, he affirms, can life be given meaning. He goes on to suggest, as we have seen, that what is needed is a return to the medieval view which proclaimed the "sacral" nature of life and described man as one who seeks God.

Given this interpretation of freedom, man's being, in Marcel's view, can be affirmed as oriented towards God. Man's "having-to-be" is, to use Husserl's terminology, "intended" (directed) towards God. But because it is of the essence of man that he is free, he has the responsibility of making his own choice.<sup>78</sup> We can therefore infer that to refuse to acknowledge God is to deny oneself. This is how Marcel agrees that man's being can be rendered absurd; to be doomed is to experience the meaninglessness of one's being as eternal unfulfilment. In the sense of self-liberation, Marcel sees freedom as necessitating a humble opening of oneself to the operation of grace. It is the cheerful, sacrificial response to a call which may come from one's fellow-existents or from God.

Marcel believes that a fresh approach must be made, if man is to be made aware of his ultimate orientation and at the same time be accorded his full dignity and personality in the world. For too long, in Marcel's opinion, (and it is to be borne in mind that he was already expressing his views when modern French positivism was enjoying its hey-day), philosophy has become increasingly ossified in impersonal abstractions.<sup>79</sup> For his part, he advocates a "concrete" philosophy which is based on concrete situations of experience. It is, in short, experience transmuted into thought.<sup>80</sup> Marcel's fresh start begins, not with a withdrawal, but with a return. He urges a restoration of the "ontological weight" to experience, and the primacy of being<sup>81</sup> understood as man's natural ordination and manifested in man's existential situation. This existential situation hinges on participation in an ascending hierarchy of unions : with the self, with others, and with God. The notion of participation is the pivot of Marcel's metaphysics. To be is to participate in being. I am only insofar as I participate in Being. This is participation, not in any Platonic Idea, but in Act for Being is to be understood in its verbal sense (and this is a cardinal point). It is a

participation in Reality.<sup>82</sup> This is a crucial moment in Marcel's dialectic and we shall return to it in the evaluative section that follows.

There are, then, three levels of participation, each of which is superior to its precedent. Marcel calls these incarnation, communion, and transcendence. But this simplified summary does not mean that the levels are separate. While there is certainly an ascending hierarchy of orders, they interpenetrate each other.

Marcel initiates his metaphysical enquiry with a consideration of experience and sensation. The realization of the inner urgings of the ontological exigence and the need to restore to human experience its ontological weight<sup>83</sup> is the first great moment of his dialectic. It leads him to formulate his very important differentiation between existence and objectivity.<sup>84</sup> Thanks to this distinction - to which frequent reference will be made in the thesis - Marcel is able to explore the possibilities of what could be called an "existential" ontological argument for the reality of God. Marcel's thesis, which he claims is not a return to pre-critical dogmatism, is that

la distinction entre l'idée de l'existence et l'existence elle-même - impasse où la réflexion philosophique risque à tout moment de se fourvoyer, - doit être rejetée ensemble: nous n'y voyons quant à nous qu'une fiction qui prend naissance dans l'acte arbitraire par lequel la pensée prétend transformer en affirmation d'objet ce qui est une connaissance immédiate et une participation. (85)

Incarnation, the "donnée centrale de la métaphysique", is, Marcel tells us, the situation of a being who appears to himself to be, as it were, bound to a body.<sup>86</sup> It is the self incarnate incarnate in the body. Incarnation is at the very basis of all human experience: through my body I am in relation to the world, to others, and to God.<sup>87</sup>

The consideration of the body, the embodied self, as "le nexus de ma présence au monde rendu manifeste"<sup>88</sup>, leads Marcel to the appreciation that I share this world with others. (At this point we have to note that the term "existent", already used, is applied by Marcel only to human beings.) The existent, Marcel says, is not alone - although there can be a salutary quality in detachment (but not in isolation or alienation).<sup>89</sup> To exist authentically - in the Marcellian sense - is to co-exist: *esse est co-esse*.<sup>90</sup> Communion, on the plane of personal being, arises only in a personal response, in a mutual encounter. The clues to this second level of ontological participation are presence and encounter and commitment. Marcel holds that, as a person in constant contact with others, my relationship with them may be either of the objectifying kind (which has no existential value) or of the subjectifying kind which is of value only when transcended into the intersubjective kind. According to this, I am to treat the other not as a "he" or a "she" (this is the objectifying kind of relationship) but as a "thou".<sup>91</sup> When, following Marcel's suggestion, this intersubjective

approach is sublimated to the consideration of the absolute, interpreted as the Absolute Thou, we arrive at the third level of participation.<sup>92</sup>

As far as Marcel is concerned, a true philosophy of existence does not reduce everything merely to existence, for existence needs to be defined with regard to something other than itself. He affirms that the need for transcendence<sup>93</sup> stems from the realization that we do not entirely belong to a world of things; Marcel reinforces his claim by referring to Saint Paul's observation, "You are not your own." The need for transcendence apparently springs from a feeling of dissatisfaction at the instability of a world characterized by a "displacement" of the notion of function. The motto of the genuine existent is not sum but sursum, as the starting-point of Marcel's metaphysics is not cogito but sumus.<sup>94</sup> Existence is a continuous movement of transcendence, a passing-beyond that which is now. The authentic person should be aware of himself far less as a being than as a "desire" to rise above everything that he is and is not, to rise above the actuality in which he feels he is involved and has a part to play, but which does not satisfy him because his present actuality falls short of his aspiration and to which he identifies himself.<sup>95</sup> From this we may conclude that we arrive at the goal of self-fulfilment by a progression from one stage to the next - a progression that is not only horizontal but vertical - until we find our fulfilment in Being.<sup>96</sup> On the religious level this final fulfilment is communion with God.

But it must be noted that the transcendence towards which we aspire is not ineffable nor inaccessible (as Jaspers would have us believe); it must be able to be experienced if the term is to have any meaning. Marcel does not consider that the word "transcendent" means "transcending experience" since he holds that we can have experience of the transcendent. We aspire, he says, towards a purer mode of existence, an experience more "recollected" and more intensely lived.<sup>97</sup> Our need for being impels our aspiration to transcendence where our soul longs to be reunited with its Source. Therein lies the secret of the transcendence of hope which looks out above this "wrinkled" world.<sup>98</sup> God is not just some objectifiable object "out there" (as J.A.T. Robinson has emphatically pointed out) but a presence. He is the Presence to be experienced as other presences are experienced. This Presence is the manifestation of God's reality as transforming love among those who acknowledge his reality in faith.<sup>99</sup>

Once it is recognized that God can be approached through the experience of presence, the unifying rôle of intersubjectivity in Marcel's metaphysics can be appreciated. This Marcellian intersubjectivity is an outgoing love which, in its interpersonal expression, prevents the individual being from shrivelling up in egocentric narcissism. Rather it draws out his full potential of self-fulfilment in commitment. In the measure that the individ-

ual existent "opens credit" in favour of the other, he is led to open himself to the irradiations of light emanating from the God who is Love. In the final analysis of Marcel's metaphysics, love - the "seed and pledge of immortality" - involves a trusting recourse to Absolute transcendence, an opening to that universal communion which can be centred only in the Absolute Thou.<sup>100</sup> Transcendence is universal because Being embraces all being, all beings, all realities. And this Universal Reality, "cet universel vivant"<sup>101</sup>, is God.

### III. An examination of Marcel's philosophy of being.

The central concern in Marcel's thought is the question of the nature of being. It is also the central concern of this thesis, for an elucidation of what he understands by "being" will enable us to establish the rôle of God in Marcel's thought. While Marcel may eschew systematization, arguing that one can be creative only as long as experience still contains uncharted zones<sup>102</sup>, there must be at least a definite cohesion and consistency in his dialectic which would allow for an eventual systematization of his thought along the lines followed by Troisfontaines, for example. We should do well, then, to apply Wittgenstein's principle that "the meaning of a word is given by the way it is used"<sup>103</sup> as a criterion for examining Marcel's use of the word "être".

Marcel agrees that the question of being is not new. It is, he declares, one of those eternal problems which we (meaning himself) approach with our own personal resources, in a different context and with a different horizon.<sup>104</sup> The problem about being, he tells us, is that it is really not a problem at all, for problems admit of solution. Marcel stands by his interpretation of being as a non-objectifiable "mystery" in that we are so intimately bound up with being (because we are) that we cannot really look at it critically or analytically. He recognizes that one of the difficulties arises from the limitations of language.<sup>105</sup> Marcel uses the French form être which can be taken as the infinitive of the verb "to be" or as a noun (i.e. the infinitive used substantively). He rejects the use of the participle étant and dislikes the idea of attaching partitive articles ("un", "des") to the word (être) when he wishes it to be taken in its verbal force.<sup>106</sup>

Despite this intention, Marcel uses the term as both être and êtres; his two great preoccupations are given as "l'exigence de l'être" and "la hantise des êtres."<sup>107</sup> It would appear, then, that he is not always consistent in his application of the term. But is he really inconsistent? Whenever he refers to "êtres", it is quite clear that he always refers to human beings or existents. (The French term "existant" is not favoured by Marcel because it connotes a certain spatio-temporal limitation - that of

finitude - and detracts from his notion of fidelity.) We shall consider his use of the term "être" and determine whether he uses it consistently, bearing in mind his theory of participation. Should there be a unifying interpretation of "être", it will be necessary to see if "êtres" can participate in it.

The principal references to "être" in Marcel's philosophical works are:

Seulement c'est d'être qu'il s'agit, non de l'être. (108)

Il me paraît indispensable de souligner que l'être qui est visé dans des expressions telles que poids ou enjeu ontologique doit être entendu comme verbe et non comme substantif. (109)

La gêne que je ressens en ces matières vient en partie de la difficulté que j'ai toujours éprouvée à discerner le rapport entre être et exister. Il me paraît évident qu'exister est une certaine façon d'être : il faudrait voir si c'est la seule. Peut-être quelque chose peut-il être sans exister. (110)

Assimiler l'être à un mode d'expérience, c'est tomber dans les pièges de la psychologie et du psychologisme. Il ne serait pas faux de dire dans une perspective assez analogue à celle de Fénelon, que nous, êtres humains, nous sommes dans une sorte d'entre-deux, de métaxu, entre l'être et le non-être ou encore que nous sommes appelés à être, que nous avons à être. Ce qui intervient ici de façon voilée, c'est la plénitude à laquelle nous aspirons. (111)

'La présence et la distance tout ensemble' [Marcel is referring to a phrase from Charles du Bos's Dialogue avec André Gide] : c'est bien cette sorte de contradiction effective qui permet de définir mon rapport à mon être. Car ce que Du Bos appelle ici l'âme, c'est bien en réalité mon être, et inversement on ne voit pas comment cet être que nous tentons d'approcher ici pourrait ne pas être qualifié d'âme. Mais s'il en est ainsi, on voit aussitôt avec quelle prudence doit être abordée l'affirmation : je suis - cette affirmation qui, chez Descartes, parce qu'il a cru pouvoir la valider une fois pour toutes, est en quelque façon proclamée. Mais je dirais bien plutôt quant à moi qu'elle ne doit pas être proférée sur le ton de l'outrecuidance et du défi, mais plutôt murmurée sur un ton qui est à la fois celui de l'humilité, de la crainte et de l'émerveillement. (112)

L'être comme lieu de la fidélité. (113)

Être, c'est bien ici résister à cette épreuve [of life], à cette dissolution progressive; nier l'être, ce sera prétendre que rien n'y peut résister. (114)

Au fond, tout ... tend vers cette conclusion que le problème de l'être et du non-être n'a de sens que là où il se convertit dans le dilemme : plénitude ou mort. (115)

L'être gage ou semence d'éternité. (116)

L'être comme principe d'inexhaustibilité. (117)



L'être, c'est ce qui ne déçoit pas; il y a de l'être du moment où notre attente est comblée; je parle de cette attente à laquelle nous participons tout entiers. (118)

Aussitôt qu'il y a création, à quelque degré que ce soit, nous sommes dans l'être. (119)

The last quotation holds the key to Marcel's ontology. Clearly Being is creativity, it is the spirit ("power") of creation. Marcel agrees that the last-quoted phrase is significant and, furthermore, reinforces its importance when he notes,

The converse is equally true : that is to say, there is doubtless no sense in using the word 'being' except where creation, in some form or other, is in view. (120)

It is in the light of the creativity which characterizes being that all his other pronouncements and his investigations into the nature and scope of being are welded into cohesion and become intelligible. It is because Being is creative that we can appreciate Marcel's stress on the verbal force of the term; it is because Being is inexhaustible that it is ever creative; it is because being is a gift that it is creative, of self and of others. Being is not a passive state of reception or a closed area of atrophied self-consciousness : this is the meaning of Marcel's distinction between being and having.<sup>121</sup> Being is not an object nor a thing; the awareness of the non-objectifiable quality of being explains Marcel's disagreement with the suggestion of a distinction between "Absolute and Relative Being".<sup>122</sup> For Marcel, being is dynamic and open; being is creative.<sup>123</sup> Its creative spirit is manifested in an active participation which is both inward-looking (through recollection) and outgoing (in communion and communication). It is because being is creative that we can appreciate the central importance of Creative Fidelity in the quest of the authentic existent for ultimate fulfilment.

Once the creative activity of being is established, it is clear that when Marcel refers to the truly creative activity of Being, he is referring to God. Marcel's Being can only be understood as God. For as God is characterized by creation, it is through his creative activity that he manifests his reality through presence in our world. God's creativity is mirrored in the activity of those ("êtres") who, having first used their freedom to acknowledge their relation of dependence on God, aspire to full and complete participation in creative being. Our other question is thereby answered : "êtres" can participate in the central activity of être. The place of God is indeed central in Marcel's thought: it underpins his entire metaphysics of ontological communion. On the highest level of human participation is the saint; on a more attainable level is the "ordinary" human. The latter, with whom Marcel shows himself to be more concerned - or so he professes - , can share in the creative activity of God in various ways : in parenthood, in "producing"

works of art, but above all in creating themselves more fully by expansion in outgoing love.<sup>124</sup>

Yet being remains, for Marcel at least, a mystery. It is mystery because it escapes the grasp of objective knowledge. In the next chapter we shall consider in more detail Marcel's distinction between problem and mystery, with particular reference to the question of God. In the present context it is important to note what Marcel has to say on the connection between being and mystery :

Coincidence du mystérieux et de l'ontologie. Il y a un mystère de la connaissance qui est d'ordre ontologique (Maritain l'a bien vu), mais l'épistémologie l'ignore, se doit de l'ignorer et le transforme en problème. (125)

Toute spécification (portant sur tel contenu auquel j'affirme savoir que je crois) présuppose au moins la possibilité d'un tel dénombrement, d'un tel inventaire. Mais d'autre part il me semble que l'être auquel va la croissance transcende tout inventaire possible, c'est-à-dire que ce ne peut pas être une chose parmi d'autres, un objet parmi d'autres (et inversement le parmi d'autres n'a de sens que pour ce qui est chose ou objet). (126)

Now if his investigations into the nature of being lead him to an awareness of the non-inventoriable quality of being so that being is a supra-empirical reality, Marcel is led to affirm that we are now in the same dimension as faith. For faith is directed to that which cannot be objectively grasped by knowledge. Faith relates to the unknown insofar as the unknown is unverifiable (by empirical processes). But is Marcel speaking here of "being", or is he speaking of "a being"? It would seem that he is speaking of the latter, that is of a being. At once, however, he notes that this "object" (for want of a better word) of faith is not a being among other beings, an object among other objects. Being, he insists, is transcendent : it goes beyond and is to be "found" beyond the scope of the empirical. It is because we ourselves are "situated" in being that we cannot really hope to finish with our enquiries into the question of being. We are reminded that being, according to Marcel, is inexhaustible. Of course, he urges us equally, we are always free to deny all this. In the final analysis it is by our use of freedom that we shall accept or reject the notion of being, as Marcel understands it, that is as ontological mystery. It is by our use of freedom that we choose to believe in or deny the reality of God. But, Marcel warns, a denial of being is a denial of self.<sup>127</sup>

As far as Marcel is concerned, the solution to the question of being is to be perceived in the notion of a need, an exigency, which arises from an inner assurance, an intuition of the mystery of being.<sup>128</sup> This is a feature of Marcel's metaphysics which will be considered in the following chapter. Just as it can be claimed that there is value in negative theology, so Marcel appears to set some store by negative ontology. To

know what the self is not (e.g. not-material) is to know something about it. From a consideration of what being is not, one may proceed to follow the thread of the discussion back to its true source :

On ne peut guère discourir que sur ce qui n'est pas (l'Etre) et par là indirectement, humblement aussi, repérer ou jalonner les pistes qui mènent vers lui, à condition que nous sachions les remonter, car il est tout aussi vrai de dire que ces mêmes pistes éloignent ou détournent de lui. (129)

Similarly, from this we may infer that, since the question of God is not approachable as a question of an object, a certain awareness of his reality can be evoked by considering attributes which are not predicable of him. Unlike some philosophers and theologians, Marcel does not favour attributing powers to God. He holds that such attributes belong to the sphere of the "problematic" in that they can be as easily disproved:

Le métaproblématique [the expression he uses to explain his more familiar term "mystery"], c'est avant tout 'la Paix qui passe tout entendement', mais cette Paix est une Paix vivante, et, comme l'a écrit Mauriac dans le Noeud de Vipères, une Paix qui est quelqu'un, une Paix créatrice. Il me semble que l'Infinité, la Toute-Puissance de Dieu ne peuvent être établies, elles aussi, que par la voie réflexe : il nous est possible de comprendre que nous pouvons nier ces attributs sans retomber dans la sphère du problématique. Cela reviendrait à dire que la théologie à laquelle la philosophie nous conduit est essentiellement négative. (130)

It will be shown, in the course of the thesis, that Marcel's philosophy, at least, does tend to become expressed in theological terms, and that it appears to be inclined to negativity. Furthermore, the question of Marcel himself predicating attributes of God will be raised.<sup>131</sup>

At this point, however, we may conclude that, for Marcel, creation is the characteristic of being; creation is the renewal of being. In the terms of his dialectic, creation is the meaning of being. Being is creativity. We can declare that his dialectic of participation does allow for both terms, être and êtres, to be compatible with the interpretation of "being" as creativity. Being-itself is creative of the universe and of êtres; "beings" can be creative of themselves and of others. According to Marcel, "beings" can only recognize their true ontological status as creatures in reference to the Creator. God is therefore the source of being. God is; God is Being. It is clear, then, that the place of God is central in Marcel's thought. We shall now proceed to see how he treats of the "problem" of God.

## FOOTNOTES TO CHAPTER ONE

1. Marcel could be described as a "philosopher for all seasons" who can sympathize with empiricists, phenomenologists, existentialists and even idealists. Elements of their varying approaches can be discerned in his writings. He sees himself as both an inheritor of the pre-Enlightenment thought and a resuscitator of the primacy of self as the object and starting-point of reflection. cf. PI 14 : "C'est vers des consonances de cet ordre [a superior awareness of being's integrity] que ma pensée philosophique est orientée. Elle est polyphonique par essence, et s'oppose par là radicalement à toutes les idéologies plus ou moins directement issues de la pensée philosophique française du XVIII<sup>e</sup> siècle."
2. Even when the atheistic emphases of writers like Sartre and Camus were capturing the minds of intellectuals in the immediate years after World War II, Marcel did not despair of a Christian brand of existentialism. In 1947 he affirmed : "Je suis convaincu qu'on serait à peu près dans la vérité en disant que l'existentialisme est en soi d'essence chrétienne, et qu'il ne peut devenir athée que par accident et en se méprenant sur sa propre nature" (TM II 345, cf. PE 88). However, the "accident" did happen, at least according to the Holy Office. On 2nd August 1950 Pope Pius XII, in his encyclical Humani Generis, condemned (atheistic) existentialism as an aberration and a danger to the Christian community. Gabriel Marcel has never explicitly acknowledged the coincidence of the encyclical and his abrupt dissociation from the label "existentialist" (cf. ST 193, SdI 9, HP 72, PR-GM 73, 75, 116). At any rate, he has not been discouraged from remaining true to himself and from continuing to philosophize, using the existential frame of reference. Just as he will not be labelled thus, neither will he consent to being called a "Catholic" writer (DH 150, cf. PR-GM 77-79).
3. PI 184. Socrates who taught and learnt from the people of the city, rather than from inanimate nature (Plato, Phaedrus 230 D), sought out his fellowmen who were wrapped in the cocoons of limited consciousness to show them by an obstetric (μαλευτική) process of elucidating awareness, how to live in the world, relate to others, and to know God.
4. PI 184.
5. PR-GM 82. The significance of this expression (the "threshold of conversion") is shown on pages 15-17.
6. This ("integrator") is a term used, not by Marcel, in recent religious thought, e.g. John E. Smith, Religion and Empiricism, The Aquinas Lecture, 1967, Marquette U.P., Milwaukee, 1967.
7. ... despite Marcel's fear that his philosophical works, at least, have been subjected to over-enthusiastic commentary. cf. PR-GM 68, SdI 11-12; see below, fn 79.
8. Troisfontaines devotes over a hundred pages of the second volume of his opus, De l'existence à l'être : La philosophie de Gabriel Marcel, to a comprehensive index of all Marcel's published writings - Philosophical treatises, articles, plays and dramatic criticism - from 1911 to 1959.
9. This interesting characteristic, to some exasperating (e.g. Marjorie Grene, Introduction to Existentialism, 128), is at best appropriate to a philosopher who gains relaxation and fresh inspiration from the solitude of his music. Marcel delights in improvisations for the piano.
10. Kenneth Gallagher, The Philosophy of Gabriel Marcel, ix. cf. EPC 9.

11. However, he often harks back to it with some nostalgia; EPC 9, SdI 9. cf. HV 5.
12. PR-GM 117-118.
13. Schg 97. Examples from his plays of remarriages (in both cases of the widower) are to be found in l'Iconoclaste and les Coeurs avides.
14. "Le drame de l'âme en exil", lecture given to the Institut Français in London, 1950. cf. PE 106, TM I 30.
15. DH 89, PI 13, Schg 96. cf. "la dominante existentielle dans mon oeuvre" in Contemporary Philosophy III (ed. Klibansky, Firenze, 1969), 172 : "C'est d'abord, et je puis dire fondamentalement à travers l'expression dramatique, que ma pensée a accédé à l'existentiel, non sans avoir à se libérer aux prix d'efforts pénibles de l'espèce de carcan idéaliste dans lequel au départ elle risquait de demeurer emprisonnée." Illustrations of such philosophical insights anticipated in his plays are given in the course of the text of the thesis and particularly in Appendix 2.
16. SdI 8-10, "La dominante existentielle dans mon oeuvre", loc. cit., 174. Marcel's preference for his theatre (cf. Schg 101) may be attributed to his complaint, already noted (fn 7) that his philosophical work may be devitalized through excessive interpretation. On the other hand, he finds that his plays retain their freshness and scope for the exploration of new depths of meaning.
17. SdI 10, 13, Schg 96, 115. In this phenomenon of being surprised by his characters and occasionally enlightened by his philosophical meditations, lies the link between the two branches of his work : "Je dirais, pour résumer ma pensée, c'est que ma philosophie est existentielle dans la mesure même où elle est en même temps théâtre, c'est-à-dire création dramatique."
18. Schg 115-116. In this respect Marcel can be seen as a successor to the Greek tradition of tragedy. cf. Sottiaux's comments on the play, Un Homme de Dieu : E. Sottiaux, Gabriel Marcel, Philosophe et Dramaturge, 168-171.
19. "Le drame de l'âme en exil", Schg 108-109.
20. This does not mean that Marcel ignores the possibility of despair. As he points out, a great deal of his Prolegomenon of Hope (Homo Viator) is concerned with the question of despair (Schg 109).
21. While Rose Meyrieux may exclaim that the only real suffering is to be alone (le Coeur des autres 111), Christiane Chesnay recognizes that we are not alone either in "sin" or in "virtue" (MC 250).
22. Schg 116.
23. PACMO 67. It is interesting to note that Marcel appears to be supported by the very text of Baudelaire (a poet!) which Maritain himself uses in order to show the correlation between God and Beauty. This occurs in Maritain's Approaches to God, 68, where he quotes Baudelaire to substantiate from literature the statement by Aquinas that God is subsistent Beauty and that "the beauty of all things derives from the divine beauty" (Aquinas, Comm. in De divinis nominibus, 4, 5). The text from Baudelaire reads : "C'est cet admirable, cet immortel instinct du Beau qui nous fait considérer la Terre et ses spectacles comme un aperçu, comme une correspondance du Ciel. La soif insatiable de tout ce qui est au-delà, et qui révèle la vie, est la preuve la plus vivante de notre immortalité" ("L'Art Romantique" in Quelques-uns de mes contemporains, VII : Théophile Gautier, p. 159, from Oeuvres complètes de Charles Baudelaire, Paris, Conard, 1925.). Among philosophers Marcel finds support in R.G. Collingwood who wrote: "Quite otherwise than the scientist and far more than the historian, the philosopher must go to school with the poets in order to learn

the use of language, and must use it in their way: as a means of exploring one's mind, and bringing to light what is obscure and doubtful in it. . . The principles on which the philosopher uses language are those of poetry; but what he writes is not poetry but prose. From the point of view of literary form, this means that whereas the poet yields himself to every suggestion that his language makes, and so produces word-patterns whose beauty is a sufficient reason for their existence, the philosopher's word-patterns are constructed only to reveal the thought which they express, and are valuable not in themselves but as a means to that end" (Philosophical Method, Oxford, Clarendon, 1933, 213-214).

24. "La dominante existentielle dans mon oeuvre", loc. cit., 174. The single sentence quoted illustrates a feature of Marcel's literary style. Another example of a lengthy sentence is given as epigraph to the Conclusion. Whereas in his notebooks, and particularly in his journal Etre et avoir (I), the sentences are often verbless and telegraphic, those of his treatises or essays often tend to be involved and cumbersome.
25. Marcel quotes John Keats who describes the world as a "vale of soul-making" (EA I 44), praises Charles Péguy (ME II 170), and devotes two chapters of his Homo Viator (283-344) to a eulogy of R.M. Rilke, "Témoin du Spirituel".
26. TR 93-94: "Si jamais cette harmonie est inventée, il y a cent à un à parier contre un qu'elle le sera par quelque poète de très simple origine - humble comme le furent Mozart, et Schubert, et Péguy - quelqu'un qui ne saura rien de Hegel, ou de Kierkegaard ou de Sartre, mais qui, dans son coeur, par quelque grâce pour nous à peine imaginable, portera comme un fruit sanglant et bénéfique cette Idée que chacun de nous - je parle des poètes et des artistes - sent au fond de soi comme une exigence imprescriptible à laquelle il ne peut se refuser sans sceller, du sceau de sa volonté mauvaise, sa propre mortalité." Emphases mine. See Chapter 6, p. 192. A further example of Marcel's "belief" in the superior claims of artists and poets may be read into Werner Schnee's declaration that "the artist will escape ontological poverty" (le Dard 117-118; see Chapter 4, fn 100).
27. HV 10. See Chapter 3, fn 99, p. 101.
28. St John 1: 19, ST 33.
29. EA II 51-52.
30. PR-GM 82. cf. EPC 181, Schg 71.
31. References by Marcel to his family background are given in PE 109-115, DH 41-43, Schg 96-98, TM I 21. References to his opinion of Catholicism in his school days are to be found in Existentialisme chrétien: Gabriel Marcel 300-301 (TM I 21) and Témoignage chrétien (1948) and may be reflected in the attitude of Marc-André in the play Rome n'est plus dans Rome (43). It could be that Marcel regretted the lack of religious upbringing. There is a temptation to read an autobiographical regret, on Marcel's part, into the words of Jacques Delorme to Madeleine about his children: "Je t'ai dit simplement que je ne voulais pas qu'ils fussent élevés comme je l'ai été moi-même, dans l'ignorance de tout ce qui touche à la religion" (l'Iconoclaste 19).
32. ST 264-265.
33. "Ascendere ergo ad Deum hoc est intrare ad semetipsum, et non solum ad se intrare, sed ineffabili quodammodo in intimis seipsum transire" - De Vanitate Mundi, II (Opera omnia Hugonis S. Victoris), PL 176, 715B. Given in translation, TM I 15 and cited by W.E. Hocking, The Christian Experience of God, 379.
34. DH 92. Marcel records his conversion and baptism in his second published diary, Etre et avoir (I, 15-27.)

35. Témoignage chrétien (24th Sept. 1948), cited TM I 24: "Non, vraiment, je ne m'explique pas comment, le jour où F. Mauriac m'eut lancé son appel, j'ai opté pour le catholicisme, plutôt que pour le protestantisme. Je me suis dit: 'Oui, je suis chrétien; ce serait une lâcheté de me dérober plus longtemps.' Mais j'ai senti alors comme un appel venant de plus loin que Mauriac, et il m'a fallu opter pour le catholicisme." In the course of an interview, "Réponse à une enquête sur l'idée de Dieu" (Age Nouveau, 1955, p 41), he attempts to clarify his choice of religious denomination: "J'ai pu me demander d'abord si je serais protestant ou catholique, mais il m'a semblé que le catholicisme constituait une réalité organique dont le protestantisme ne nous présentait que des expressions affaiblies, variables, sans aucun critère qui permette de choisir entre les unes et les autres. Pour moi c'est très net, le catholicisme représente un état plus organique que le protestantisme trop égal à soi-même."
36. DH 215. As far as Marcel is concerned, he says that all his fears about committing himself in the decisive step of conversion were dissipated when grace shone through. On 5th March 1929, he writes: "Je ne doute plus. Miraculeux bonheur, ce matin. J'ai fait pour la première fois l'expérience de la grâce... J'ai été enfin cerné par le christianisme, et je suis submergé... c'est bien une naissance" (EA I 24).
37. In his own case at least, Marcel asserts, his baptism - 29th March 1929 - was the beginning of a new life or at least a rejuvenation (he was, after all, in his fortieth year). Shortly after his baptism he writes: "Le miracle chrétien m'apparaît à l'heure actuelle comme point de rajeunissement absolu. Et peut-être comme source éternelle ou permanente de tout rajeunissement absolu" (EA I 28).
38. DH 219. cf. HCH 191-192.
39. Plato, Sophista 247: τὰ ὄντα ὡς ἔστιν οὐκ ἄλλο τι πλὴν <sup>ναμικς</sup> δύ-  
It is interesting to note that Professor John E. Smith takes up this idea and extends it to a definition of God. "God is primarily Power expressed in that special form which is Spirit." He concludes: "The reality of God is the reality of the Power that once created and now sustains the Beloved Community." - J.E. Smith, "The Reality of God and the Denial of God," presented as Presidential Address at a meeting of the American Theological Society in 1968 and published in The Journal of Religion, vol. 5, No. 2, April 1971, 83-102. The sentences quoted appear on pages 100 and 102.
40. EPC 22.
41. HP 82-83. Marcel does not hesitate to assert that philosophies founded on anguish have seen their day and in fact lead to a dead-end (HP 186). He affirms, on the other hand, that a sense of uneasiness similar to that understood by Augustine in his Confessions can be salutary. In 1965 (Biblio 33/7, "Questionnaire Marcel Proust") Marcel described his state of mind as "L'angoisse en présence du monde qui prend forme sous nos yeux et du déclin de toute civilisation." cf. Le déclin de la sagesse, "Le crépuscule du sens commun", EA I 94, 157, HCH 33-58, PACMO 31-32, PE 84, ST 29-34, Schg 43. Marcel presents a "fashionable" version of anguish through the character of the pseudo-intellectual Prusz in Mon Temps n'est pas le vôtre (185).
42. The phrase is not Marcel's but of Dietrich von Hildebrand.
43. cf. HCH 20, 28, 30, 36-58, 63, 176-177, 197, EAI 23, 25-26, HV 148, Schg 51.
44. EA II 22-35. He alleges that even the current nihilism is imbued with a technocratic character (HCH 197). For further comments on "technolatry" as a facet of contemporary irreligion (in Marcel's eyes), see Chapter 2, pp. 45-46.

45. Schg 49. cf. DH 204
46. ST 166. cf. HCH 139: "La vie n'est plus aimée." Marcel charges that not only "la technique" but Cartesian rationalism has brought about this desacralization (ST 166).
47. PACMO 51 (with a reference to W. Shakespeare, Macbeth, V, v, 26-27). cf. HV 149, HCH 47, ME I 189, HdD 70, CM 39, 49. That there should be a "positive" meaning to life is the basis of Marcel's option for a theistic existentialism. See Chapter 6.
48. ST 170.
49. ST 154-155.
50. Schg 42.
51. Marcel expresses reservations, for example, about Tillich's interpretation of "holy" (Schg 41-42). Tillich was influenced by Rudolf Otto (The Idea of the Holy, tr. Harvey, 2nd ed., London, OUP, 1957) and one may see a slight convergence in Marcel's own interpretation of "sacral" in the text of the thesis which follows. But it would be going too far to presume that Marcel was in any way influenced by Otto. Marcel notes, for example, "The word 'sacred' (which he later calls 'sacral' in the same context) supersedes every assent to a specific credo, even if one is certainly able to interpret it in the light of higher certitudes" (Schg 21). cf. ST 158. Furthermore, Marcel says, one does not have to go out of town to any "Sacred Woods" to find the "Sacral". He does, however, allow that the Japanese (whose country he has visited) seem to have understood the meaning of the word better than some Western people (ST 161).
52. Schg 50, 52, ST 163-165. He gives as an example the adoration of a mother before her child (ST 160).
53. ST 159-160 (quoting EA II 28). cf. Schg 50.
54. ST 173. The "return to the sources", he explains, is not to be understood in terms of chronological origins. What he is implying is a return to the acknowledgment of our status as creature and so to the acknowledgment of the Creator.
55. ST 157, 173-174. Marcel claims that he prefers to remain on a plane more philosophical than theological. He speaks of recollection rather than of prayer, "car ce mot [prayer] comporte des résonances un peu ambiguës, auxquelles je conçois que certaines âmes pourtant très hautes demeurent réfractaires" (HCH 76). However, he runs the risk of ensuring that these "deeply spiritual" souls remain refractory when he jumps off his philosophical plane and asserts that the acknowledgment of the "sacral" can be brought about only by the intervention of grace. "Grace can only reach the individual, and if it reaches the masses through the individual then it will only happen if the masses arouse themselves from the stupor that made them masses in the first place" (Schg 52). And that rather derogatory statement about the "masses" serves to strengthen the feeling that Marcel is proposing an elitist metaphysics (see page 15).
56. EA II 29. "Et," he adds, "il vaudrait la peine de se demander pourquoi."
57. Schg 53. cf. HCH 95. Marcel points out that this is what Martin Buber and he have tried to prove in their writings (cf. Schg 73-92).
58. HCH 76, 141. In this light, the question of evil and suffering is also illumined. According to Marcel's exposition (see Chapter 4, section v [a]), I can only interpret another's suffering to the extent that, through intersubjectivity, I share in it. My response to the other's suffering should be one of love. cf. PACMO 58, HCH 94-95, PI 176.
59. HV 117.



60. HV 92-93.
61. HV 109. cf. HV 90-91, HCH 140, ST 165.
62. ST 168. cf. HV 133 (where he treats of the impossibility of a "biological morality"), Schg 44, ST 155-156.
63. Schg 46, HV 122.
64. HCH 191. He adds, "On pourrait dire, je crois, qu'une éthique de l'honneur n'est pas seulement une éthique de la fidélité, mais encore une éthique de la gratitude, et qu'à la limite cette gratitude affecte un caractère ontologique, car elle porte sur le fait même d'avoir été admis à être, c'est-à-dire au fond d'avoir été créée" (HCH 191-192). cf. HV 149.
65. HCH 141.
66. HV 174. Not only does a "sacral" awareness of life reveal to us the true meaning of life, but also it reveals our very being and destiny, or incarnation (HV 122; see following section in thesis) and redemption (HCH 140; see Chapter 6). Marcel acknowledges his indebtedness for the realization of life's meaning as service to Christian tradition : "J'aperçois maintenant la profonde réalité du théocentrisme bérullien. Nous sommes ici pour servir; oui, c'est l'idée de service en tous sens qu'il faut creuser" (EA II 23). cf. HCH 156. The nature of Marcel's "applied theocentrism" will be considered in the Conclusion.
67. HV 166. cf. PI 37.
68. HCH 156.
69. ST 170 (emphases mine). v. supra fn 48.
70. DH 108, PE 64. cf. EA I 46. This does not mean, as Plato has pointed out (Protagoras 340), that being and becoming are synonymous.
71. PACMO 51.
72. ScI 265. cf. PACMO 56.
73. See Chapter 2, pp. 57-58.
74. Given, without reference, by Troisfontaines as epigraph to his first volume. cf. EA I 176, EPC 19.
75. DH 120. Life, Marcel declares, is a constant effort to achieve the identification of "I am free" with "I am I", for freedom is neither attribute nor predicate (DH 120, 197, ME II 115, ST 226).
76. See TM I 307 for two of Marcel's public statements on his own view of the fundamental difference, on the question of freedom, between Sartre and himself; the difference lies in the recognition by Marcel - and the rejection by Sartre - of grace. A useful critique of Sartrean freedom is given by W.A. Luijpen, Existential Phenomenology, p. 344.
77. HP 70-71 : "Contrairement à une tendance qui prévaut actuellement chez nombre de philosophes étrangers à toute expérience, je dirais même à toute préoccupation religieuse, je demeure convaincu que c'est seulement par rapport à la grâce que la liberté humaine peut-être définie en profondeur : et que si elle est considérée en elle-même, elle risque fort de se changer en son contraire, ou encore de se réduire à une sorte d'analogie dérisoire et caricatural des attributs dont on a au préalable dépouillé un Dieu jugé inexistant. En d'autres termes, la liberté est sans doute essentiellement l'acquiescement ou le refus qu'il nous appartient de marquer par rapport à la grâce, ce refus pouvant d'ailleurs toujours se déguiser en une neutralité fallacieuse."

78. "Il s'agit," Marcel says, using Sartre's own distinction between being and nothingness (although he does not use néant), "d'une option décisive, d'un choix entre être et ne pas être. Mais nous avons aujourd'hui à reconnaître que le non-être peut être préféré, qu'il peut affecter le visage même de l'être, et c'est ce travestissement que le philosophe est tenu de dénoncer expressément" (HCH 96). It can be seen, then, that Marcel in no way entertains Sartre's proposition of a néant as an alternative to être.
79. Frustrated by Fichte's attempt to deduce the empirical self from the transcendental self, Marcel directed his first researches towards the "concrete" examination of the individual and of the transcendent, as opposed to idealism (represented by Léon Brunschvicg) which was based on the impersonal and the immanent (HV 190-191). Philosophy, for Marcel, is a response to an appeal, a vocation in the full etymological sense of the word and, therefore, a matter of personal commitment. cf. ST 17, HCH 34-35, 80-81, 85, 195, 198-199, PI 14, DH 217, PR-GM 108, 111. Marcel's wariness of commentators' opinions on his philosophy is probably due to his awareness that in the past "concrete" thought has degenerated into scholasticism or has been "sterilized" by devitalized commentaries (EPC 94).
80. EPC 44. Marcel acknowledges the influence of Bergson on his own thought and on his "untiring and obstinate battle against the spirit of abstraction." cf. JM ix (Preface to English translation), HCH 7.
81. cf. the comment at the end of the paragraph on page 23.
82. PACMO 51, EPC 37. Marcel may be greatly indebted to Royce whose ideas influenced Hocking who in turn influenced Marcel. The French philosopher observes a close parallel in Royce's own theory of being (MR 224; see epigraph to the Conclusion, p. 205).
83. EA I 128, DH 106-107. Bollnow, in his Französischer Existentialismus (pp. 165-166), makes the interesting observation that, in the matter of experiential knowledge, both Marcel and Dilthey, while working from vastly different starting-points, arrived at parallel conclusions.
84. JM 309-329. This treatise, which first appeared as an article in la Revue de Métaphysique et de Morale (1925), can be described as the blue-print of existentialism, certainly in the French sphere of influence. Marcel notes that the appearance of a stable agreement between thought and its object does not always correspond to reality; this, he proposes, is particularly the case with existence. Existence and the thing that exists, he asserts, cannot be dissociated; we must admit the indissoluble unity of existence and of the existent (JM 313). As knowledge minimizes its object (JM 273), we cannot dissociate the "I" of "I exist" without establishing a dualism and thereby destroying the union and assurance of personal individuality. This assurance coincides closely with the reality on which it bears, a reality which is as global as the assurance itself (JM 314). The same union of myself with my self (incarnate in my body) can be seen in the soul-body relationship and this realization leads to an awareness of the almost inexpressible (for fear of objectification) relationship of self with being, and so to the question of the "existence" of God. The tremendous significance of Marcel's distinction between existence and objectivity with reference to God will be thrown into sharp relief as we proceed.
85. JM 314-315.
86. EA I 11.
87. EPC 37. cf. JM 261, ST 264. Sensation is a mode of participation, but not the only dimension of participation. One of the problems arising from this first level is the spatial reference of incarnation which would seem to indicate that incarnation is situated in time and

space whereas communion and transcendence extend beyond such limits. This is one area of thought which Marcel has not fully clarified (cf. Gallagher, op. cit., 21). The term "incarnation has certain theological undertones, as well. Although Marcel insists that he uses the word to denote the human condition and without religious connotations, it none the less finds its fulfilment (as Troisfontaines suggests strongly, TM II 295, Existentialisme et pensée chrétienne, 60) only in the Incarnation. This theological Mystery refers to the manifestation of the Word of God incarnate among his creatures. Marcel himself has no objection to this conclusion. "Sans que je m'en sois rendu compte exactement, tout au moins à l'origine, cette recherche s'orientait vers le Dieu incarné, vers le Dieu qui s'est conféré l'existence en devenant un homme comme moi." And if, he admits, his research leads to God - in the matter of incarnation which is the bodily form of my being - it follows that his whole research into being, tracing it to Being in its fulness, must lead to God.

88. EPC 36. cf. PI 114. In order to refute the objection that his enquiry into sensation may lead to an interpretation of sensation as the reception of messages which would complicate the soul-body relationship, Marcel distinguishes between being and having (JM 239, 251, 253, 301-302, EA I 104-105, 168, 195, EPC 33, HV 78, PI 70, DH 67-68, 130). See Germaine Crompt's article on Marcel's early investigations into the body-soul relationship (included in the Bibliography). Furthermore, Marcel repudiates the charge of materialism (JM 305, PI 185).
89. EPC 36. cf. EA I 22-23, EPC 37, 130, PI 114.
90. cf. PACMO 82, EPC 22, M. Heidegger, Sein und Zeit, 117 : "Alles Dasein ist Mitsein."
91. cf. Schg 73, EA I 36. Among the obstacles to communion Marcel indicates i) judgment : PI 54-57, Schg 10; cf. PR-GM 56-57, CM 49, RPR 45, 71-72, 126, 134-141, FdT (SdI) 341, 348; ii) alienation : HV 228, PI 123, Schg 80, 88-89; cf. MC 55, 250, TM I 18; iii) egocentrism : ME II 11, 37.
92. Commitment to God, being the highest existential value chosen in metaphysical terms, needs to be absolute. The yardstick of Christianity is charity - to self in a selflessly motivated manner, to others in intersubjectivity, and to God in love and consecration. Thus against Heidegger's radical "no" to the world, the true Christian says "yes" and, as Seymour Cain has observed (Gabriel Marcel 29), to say "is" is to say "yes" and to say "yes" is to say "thou". cf. EA I 118. We are reminded of Jacob Böhme's summary that all things derive from a Yes and a No (Fragm. 43, ix, Betrachtung göttlicher offenbarung, Sog. 177, theosophische Fragen; 3, 2f).
93. ME I 47-66. cf. ME II 184.
94. PACMO 46, EPC 215, HV 31, 202, ME II 12. For Marcel's concern at the "indiscreet and indistinct" use of the term "transcendence", see RPR 172 (Postface) and ME I 47-48. His own notion of transcendence will be taken up again for consideration in later sections of the thesis, cf. Chapter 2, p. 60 and Chapter 5, p. 152. On the possibility of "transascendence" as suggested by Jean Wahl, see RPR 171 and ST 97.
95. HV 31. cf. P. Tillich, The Shaking of the Foundations, 31.
96. cf. K. Gallagher, op. cit., xi (Preface).
97. ME I 64. He asks (ME I 53) : "Ne pourrait-on dire que créer, c'est toujours créer au-dessus de soi?" Defending his assertion that experience can extend beyond the immanent, he makes these comments : "Il convient cependant de se demander si ce ne serait pas cette confuse représentation qui est impliquée lorsqu'on parle, à la façon du kantisme pris à la lettre, de ce qui est en dehors de l'expérience, de ce qui

est au delà des limites de l'expérience. Ceci en dernière analyse ne veut absolument rien dire, puisque la détermination en dehors de est elle-même empirique, est elle-même à l'intérieur de l'expérience" (ME I 55). "Dire que le transcendant est encore immanent à l'expérience, c'est malgré tout persister à objectiver celle-ci et l'imaginer comme une sorte d'espace dont il serait pour ainsi dire une dimension" (ME I 56). "Je le répète, l'exigence de transcendance ne saurait en aucun cas être interprétée comme le besoin de dépasser toute expérience quelle qu'elle soit; car au delà de toute expérience, il n'y a rien qui se laisse je ne dis pas seulement penser mais même pressentir. Il serait beaucoup plus juste de dire que ce qui est en question c'est la substitution d'un certain mode d'expérience à d'autres" (ME I 56). "Nous aboutissons donc à cette conclusion négative mais très importante qu'il n'est pas possible de réduire l'expérience au fait pour un sujet d'expérimenter ses propres états" (ME I 60).

98. Schg 66.
99. cf. MR 224, EA I 214, and John E. Smith's address on "The Reality of God and the Denial of God" (see above, fn 39). For a more complete examination of Marcel's notion of presence, and in particular of his "presential analogy" with reference to God, see Chapter 3, pp. 82-84.
100. HV 200, "Theism and Personal Relationships" (in Crosscurrents, 1950), pp. 37-40. The application of this idea of "opening credit" in love and fidelity, and its extension into Marcel's notion of immortality will be considered in Chapters 5 and 6. For an illustration from Marcel's theatre of his dialectic of ontological communion, see Appendix 2, II, pp. 225-226.
101. EPC 18. Using a musical metaphor, Marcel says that transcendence is a communion in a polyphonic universality (ME II 188), indicating a whole of harmoniously functioning parts. It is, he asserts, the only concrete universality (ME II 142). And only Christianity, as long as it remains faithful to the spirit of universality which is its very principle, gives us the lever to transcendence (RPR 172 [Postface] ).
102. PE 128. Marcel claims in his defence that his "disposition heuristique" in no way implies a "dilettantisme de la recherche". What is of importance to him, "c'était d'accéder à la confirmation d'une certaine assurance initiale, mais qui au départ se présentait bien plus comme un pressentiment que comme une conviction." ("La dominante existentielle dans mon oeuvre" in Contemporary Philosophy, III, ed. R. Klibansky, p. 171). Despite his protestations, it will be indicated in the course of the examination of some of his themes that Marcel appears to indulge in literary dilettantism.
103. L. Wittgenstein, Investigations, II, 23 (Oxford, Blackwell, 1958, pp. 6, 12), Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus, 5.6, 5.61 (London, Kegan Paul, Trench, Trubner & Co. Ltd, 1922, p. 148). cf. R.B. Braithwaite, An Empiricist's View of the Nature of Belief, p. 10 (Cambridge, U.P., 1955).
104. ST 112-113. This refers to a part of a transcription of the discussion with certain prominent French thinkers (in this instance M. Alquié), after Marcel had delivered a paper "L'Etre devant la pensée interrogative" before a meeting of the Société Française de Philosophie, 25 January 1958.
105. ST 32-33. We cannot, he thinks, put ourselves in "being" or "grasp" it. (If anything, being has a hold over us) cf. EA I 55, 122. Marcel stresses what he calls his recourse to the "concrete approaches" to being: we can see only the areas illumined by the "light" irradiating from being (cf. FP 64). Elsewhere (HCH 129), he states firmly that "being" is not a "thing"; accordingly, "ontology as the science of being" is not, for him, a happy expression. It would be nice, he muses,

(ST 97) if a metaphysics could be constructed without reference to "being" but nobody has succeeded, or could succeed, in rendering him that service.

106. ST 304, 89, 103.

107. EPC 220-221. Given as the epigraph to this chapter.

108. JM 202.

109. DH 107.

110. EA I 44. In a footnote (same page) he comments : "L'exemple le plus simple qui se présente à moi est celui du passé, qui n'existe plus, mais je ne peux pas dire purement et simplement qu'il n'est pas." He notes (ME II 25) that Aquinas, as interpreted by Gilson, seems to identify being and existence. A study is made in Appendix 1 of Marcel's affinity to Augustine rather than to Aquinas on the interpretation of the classical philosophical concept of "essence". We shall limit ourselves, in this present context, to Marcel's observation, after referring to a passage from Rilke, that every human being, insofar as he is endowed with memory, shares in the activity (proper to the poet) by which the visible is transmuted into the invisible. "Mais ne serait-ce pas justement ici," he asks, "que se situe l'articulation de l'existence et de l'être?" (ME II 31).

111. DH 107-108.

112. ME II 33-34. His explanation is important; he says that he pronounces the affirmation "I am" with humility because being is something that can only be granted to us as a gift, with fear because we are liable to make ourselves unworthy of the gift of being and be condemned to lose it except for the assistance of grace, and with wonder because the gift of being brings with it light and is in fact light. Marcel insists on the virtue of humility in the recognition and awareness of the "mystery of being". As Gallagher explains: "What Marcel refers to is ontological humility, which is an existential attitude : it is a recognition of a depth in being which surpasses and includes us. In a word, it is the profound acknowledgment of finitude" (Gallagher, op. cit., 5). Concerning the element of wonder at being, cf. E.L. Mascall, Words and Images, p. 80 and H.D. Lewis, Our Experience of God, pp. 107-108.

113. EA I 49, 117. cf. PE 127.

114. JM 178.

115. PI 105.

116. PI 104.

117. EA I 127. The next day ( 1 November 1932) he wonders, "L'univers comme déhiscence de l'être? Notion à essayer."

118. JM 177. cf. JM 179-180, ME II 46.

119. EA I 188. cf. EPC 19 : "Au départ de toute création, visible ou non, on découvre la même présence, et, ajouterai-je, la même sommation de l'être à l'âme qu'il investit, mais aussi l'acte, identique en ses spécifications infinies, par lequel l'âme rend témoignage à cette même présence qu'il lui est au reste donné de pouvoir récuser, c'est-à-dire annuler, dans la mesure même où elle est âme, c'est-à-dire liberté." See Chapter 3, fn 83, p. 100.

120. Marcel, writing in his Foreword to Gallagher's work, op. cit., xiii. In his review of Gallagher's book, Louis-B. Geiger does not agree with Marcel's comment that the converse is true. Geiger explains : "L'affirmation de Marcel est peut-être vraie, mais elle ne l'est certainement pas, ni en vertu de l'expérience de l'être faite dans la

créativité, ni, moins encore, en vertu d'une règle logique qui commande la conversion des propositions" (Dialogue, 1964-1965, vol. 2, p. 430; the review extends from p. 426 to p. 432).

121. JM 301 : "Au fond tout se ramène à la distinction entre ce qu'on a et ce qu'on est." cf. PACMO 86, EA I 181-190, 193-220. See above, fn 88.
122. ST 92-95. M. Bénézé had suggested the terms Absolute and Relative Being to help Marcel. Absolute Being, he explains, has the force of a noun and is singular in connotation, Relative Being has the force of a verb and is multiple in connotation. The Relative supposes the Absolute, but the Absolute has no need of the Relative. There can be a movement only from the Relative to the Absolute. In reply, Marcel agrees with the last proposition but he is not enthusiastic about the terms, least of all with "Absolute" which he says makes for "thingification (réification). At once we note that he himself does not seem his objection to his own use of the word in his key phrase, "the Absolute Thou". This is a matter to which we shall return in Chapter 2 ( p. 60). Continuing his comments on "absolute" in the present context, he declares that it has "une sorte de résonance chosiste". He also sees an untenable duality if Grund (associated with the idea of Absolute Being) and Pleroma are both used. His own term, Pleroma, relates to perfect communion in Being which, in Marcel's view, is sufficient guarantee for its retained use (ST 95). It all depends, of course, on his own interpretation.
123. It can be appreciated by now that Marcel is following the lead of Plato who, as we have already noted, defined being as power (see p.17). Marcel's affinity with Plato as well as with Aristotle, but only in a "Christianised" form, will be commented on in Appendix 1. He acknowledges his admiration and indebtedness to Plato, particularly in the Sophista (ST 112). This is in connection with his rejection of the word "soubassement" (for Grund) is "soubassement" is "substance". For him, the term "substance", also, is "chargé de ce que j'ai appelé les associations chosistes." It should be noted, in passing, that Marcel's Being as Creativity is in no way similar to A.N. Whitehead's "creativity" or "God" (Process and Reality, p. 9).
124. This is in accord with his aim which he gives as "to establish the relationship of a subject, in his actual capacity as a subject, to a reality which cannot be regarded as objective, yet which is persistently required and recognized as real" (PE 127). Elsewhere he adds : "Je ne me soucie de l'être que pour autant que je prends conscience plus ou moins distinctement de l'unité sous-jacente qui me relie à d'autres êtres dont je pressens la réalité" (ME II 20).
125. EA I 125.
126. EA I 153. Emphasis of "croyance" mine.
127. EA I 150 : "Au lieu que l'ordre ontologique ne peut être reconnu que personnellement par la totalité d'un être engagé dans un drame qui est le sien tout en le débordant infiniment en tous sens - un être auquel a été impartie la puissance singulière de s'affirmer ou de se nier, selon qu'il affirme l'Être et s'ouvre à lui - ou qu'il le nie et du même temps se clôt: car c'est en ce dilemme que réside l'essence même de sa liberté." cf. EA I 166 : "Plus je suis, plus je m'affirme comme étant - moins je me pose comme autonome."
128. ST 80-85.
129. HCH 129. cf. EPC 91 : "Il faudra donc déclarer, si scandaleuse que puisse d'abord sembler une telle affirmation, que plus je participe effectivement à l'être, moins je suis en mesure de savoir ou de dire à quoi je participe, ou, plus exactement, moins cette question offre pour moi un sens; et la signification essentielle de la théo-

logie négative consistera à cerner, par exclusions successives et comme concentriques, cette affirmation centrale avec laquelle celui qui la profère en vient à faire corps au point de ne pouvoir même plus la proférer." As far as the possibility of any charge of pantheism is concerned, Marcel considers that his notion of participation does not lead to any pantheist position. He bases his "acquittal", in part at least, on the idea of reciprocity in participation; his dialectic concerns a spiritual relationship of being with being and, therefore, we infer, of being with Being. "Et ceci," he states, "suffit à réfuter un certain panthéisme, à en montrer le néant métaphysique" (JM 207). As it can be seen from the text of the thesis, Marcel understands as one of the basic facts of his metaphysics that being is something we receive - it is a gift, and our ontological status is that of creature who has received his being, his life, his existence from God as Creator. God is separate from us as we are from him. We are invited to share more fully in being without being Being itself. Similarly, we are not the being of others; in participative intersubjectivity the real core of the individual person is indissoluble and distinct. cf. Chapter 3, p. 89; Chapter 4, p. 106; Appendix 1, pp. 218, 219 (fn 1).

130. EA I 151-152.

131. For a consideration of the element of negative theology in Marcel's thought, see Chapter 2, p. 61; for his treatment of faith and his attributes of God, see Chapter 4, p. 115.

## CHAPTER TWO

THE PROBLEM OF GOD

N'avoir pas son centre en soi,  
 mais en Dieu :  
 hors de la pas de religion.

~ G. MARCEL, Journal métaphysique, 231.

Ce qui manque le plus aux hommes,  
 c'est la connaissance de Dieu.

~ FENELON, Oeuvres XVIII, 276,  
 (Paris, 1823).

Avant tout, ce qui manque à ce monde,  
 c'est la conscience de Dieu.

~ G. MARCEL, "Réponse à une enquête  
 sur l'idée de Dieu" in  
Age Nouveau, 1955, 40.

Where there is no God there is no man.

~ N. BERDYAEV, The End of Our Times, 80.  
 (London, Sheed, 1933).



## I. Man in a World-without-God. God as Problem.

### i. Background

La question fondamentale reste celle de l'existence  
de Dieu. (1)

Gabriel Marcel expresses quite forcefully his concern for the plight of man who seems, to him, to be increasingly isolated in the world. He attributes this alienation to a loss of a sense of need for God. There has been such a progressive dissatisfaction with the presentation of the idea of God (which Marcel blames on an outmoded theological tradition) that the decline of interest in the idea of God can be remarked in the juxtaposed citations of Fénelon and Marcel given as epigraphs to this chapter. When Fénelon was writing (in the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries) the possibility of God was at least admitted; Fénelon complains that his contemporaries do not know God. What Marcel gives as his diagnosis of the world's malady in the mid-twentieth century is that man is no longer aware of God.

Among the factors which Marcel points out as contributing to the decline of a need for God are the rationalized gods of the philosophers and of deists, the attempts of agnostics, the psychology of Feuerbach, and the socio-economic ideologies of Marx and Engels.<sup>2</sup> However, he identifies as an increasingly powerful influence in the eclipse of God the rise of a sociological humanism. Its encouragement to man to improve his condition without acknowledging dependence on God as creator is a source of grave concern for Marcel :

D'une manière générale, on peut dire, semble-t-il que  
l'homme, si nous considérons l'évolution historique et  
sociologique, telle qu'elle s'est poursuivie depuis  
deux siècles, a perdu sa référence divine : il cesse  
de se confronter à un Dieu dont il serait la créature  
et l'image. (3)

It was against this background and in an atmosphere charged with the varying principles of positivism, agnosticism, theosophy, deism and rationalism, of naturalistic evolution and anthropomorphic theism, that the young and religiously uncommitted Marcel began his own investigations into the nature of religion. He became concerned with those features of irreligion which he saw as combining forces with other elements obstructive to the development of true participation in the mystery of being.

### ii. Marcel's views on contemporary irreligion

Of the influences contributing to a sense of irreligion in the world of the twentieth century, Marcel distinguishes three as the most insidiously potent. These are the points of view presented by what he calls the philo-

sophies of "modern" enlightenment, of the supremacy of Life as "the Vital Principle", and of applied science (la technologie).<sup>4</sup> His aversion to these "dangers" seems to stem, negatively, from a lingering reaction to idealism and, positively, from his desire to restore the "sacral" element to life.

(a) Modernism.

Referring to what he sees as a brand of modernism, Marcel notes that those who claim to be "enlightened" tend to disparage, wilfully or unconsciously, the degrees of attainment reached in preceding times. He is not being original when he proclaims that this attitude, and its corollary that any given period of history is different and distinct in its morality and priority of values from any other era, is a grave oversimplification.<sup>5</sup> Marcel gives as examples of disparagement in the domain of religion statements which emphasize the date :

"Il n'est plus possible aujourd'hui, dira-t-on communément, de croire au miracle ou à l'incarnation. Il n'est pas permis à un homme de 1930 d'admettre le dogme de la résurrection de la chair." (6)

For his own part, Marcel does not appear to share the fashionable Zeitgeist of his contemporaries in this sphere at least. He himself favours an "applied theocentrism" on the model of the medieval thinkers of the Christian tradition.<sup>7</sup>

At the time of his conversion he seems to have been antagonistic to any historical criticism of Christianity. This antagonism may well have been an expression of his desire to break with idealism which, in his early years, had been principally represented by the German school. This school was also characterized by an attitude of historical critique.<sup>8</sup> In that period leading up to his "exorcism" of idealism, Marcel observed that a pragmatic historicity may lead to the rejection of faith as a human experience. But while the intelligibility characteristic of each is undoubtedly different, it does not follow - as Marcel suggested at the time - that faith and historical knowledge are incompatible. With time he has mollified in his attitude. However, he has never really bothered to show that historical criticism, although it is limited to a certain degree of truth, is nevertheless open to a higher sphere of intelligibility. Marcel admits the value of historical criticism only as a means of showing that philosophy has to be lived, so that only one who has lived a philosophical problem can appreciate its significance to those who have lived it before him. He states flatly,

L'histoire de la philosophie présuppose la philosophie,  
et non inversement. (9)

Gabriel Marcel is content to leave the area of historical appreciation to such writers as Henri Daniel-Rops and Etienne Gilson.

(b) Life as Vital Principle.

The basic idea of the philosophy of Life as the Vital Principle is given by Marcel to be that the progress of life is considered not as a value but as a source of values or a basis of evaluation.<sup>10</sup> He is at once opposed to this outlook in which life is treated more as a generalized abstraction than as that which affects the individual in his personal entity. The danger as he points it out is that if a person prefers to believe in life as the pure present moment, he should soon be led to reject the notion of the creativity of being, that is of being as a continual process of becoming. His only conclusion on this kind of philosophy is that by its nature it is destined to be ambiguous.<sup>11</sup> In his own view value and life are inseparable, especially when related in a spiritual context, and that life has value only when its value is witnessed through consecration (the idea of service and, at its highest level, of sacrifice).<sup>12</sup>

Marcel insists that my life is not the same as my being : this distinction permits the possibility of salvation. Despite his misgivings about Maritain's "sixth way to God"<sup>13</sup>, Marcel's own argument is very similar. My life, he says, has been given to me so that, mysteriously, I am before I exist. Only thereafter do I live, do I exist. Given this distinction between being and life, once I begin to live, my being is at stake, for my being is henceforth involved in my life.<sup>14</sup> Accordingly, we can appreciate how Marcel explains the meaning of life with its attendant sense of anguish, as well as the meaning of evil and suffering. In terms of Marcel's dialectic, a person's life is a continual struggle : negatively, to ward off the inclination to despair at the apparent unintelligibility of existence and to hold on to something that has been entrusted to him; positively, to "create" himself in the constant process of becoming so that his being is ultimately fulfilled. We may infer that since what is entrusted is one's being and since this world is a "vale of soul-making"<sup>15</sup>, the soul is immersed in being. There is an evident connection between Marcel's distinction between being and life :

ce qui n'existe de plus profond en moi n'est pas de moi  
and Saint Paul's axiom, frequently quoted by Marcel, "You are not your own."<sup>16</sup>

(c) A divinized technology.

A salient feature of Marcel's own philosophy of life is his hostility to the "desacralizing" tendency of technology as a means of alienating man from God. By applied science or technology Marcel understands any branch

of learning which tends to guarantee to man the mastery of a definite object so that it can be regarded as manipulation, that is a way of handling or moulding a given matter.<sup>17</sup> Marcel hastens to assure us that he has no quarrel with applied science in itself provided it is kept in its proper place. To explain, he distinguishes two areas for examination by the human mind : the objective or "problematic" which is situated in the sphere of "having" and the "metaproblematic" which is situated in the sphere of "being". The first is proper to science, the latter to metaphysics.<sup>18</sup> Marcel's warnings against excessive enthusiasm for the progress of man through his technological advances seem to be heavily influenced by his fear that man is too easily "won over" to techniques. He implies that man has left himself defenceless against the enticements of a "heresy of technolatry". Without enlightening us on his own position, Marcel declares that sin, for example, is beyond the operations of science; salvation also is rendered meaningless in an intellectual climate dominated by the belief that it is the business of science to restore all that is accidentally upset in a natural order.<sup>19</sup> But, although he recognizes the validity of scientific achievement in its proper areas of competency, Marcel fails to show that, while man is homo faber, man need not be a prisoner of his techniques. It can be objected that man can invent his means and instruments to realize his spiritual aims. By working to improve his earthly situation, man can humanize his universe and, as Claudel says, make it better than it was even in God's eyes.

Marcel appears to be obsessed with a need to rescue man from the snares of a divinized technology. In his view, man's only chance for salvation from the depersonalizing and dehumanizing tendencies of "technolatry" is conversion. As has been noted, this conversion is primarily an awareness of our ontological condition.<sup>21</sup> He insists, moreover, that this conversion, although not specifically religious in nature or orientation, implies grace and freedom. At once difficulties arise with the introduction of quasi-theological notions. We must first consider his argument concerning the need to break away from the temptation to anthropocentrism which he claims is latent in the glorification of technology.

Marcel proclaims that the grace implicit in "conversion" is accorded to us only if first we are disponible (available, willing to respond), by understanding that grace is analogous to the gift itself. If, therefore, we are prepared to give of ourselves, to open ourselves to illimitable credit (a phenomenological metaphor used by Marcel to illustrate ontological disponibilité), in turn we shall receive the grace of conversion. But, he warns, this conversion still depends for its actualization on our will - and therefore on our freedom - rather than on our reason. He proceeds to argue that if we are truly open to others and care for them in love, fidel-

ity and hope, this conversion will be facilitated by the awareness that contemporary mankind is being pervasively assimilated into a schematization of things. It is this urgent and insidious assimilation which Marcel identifies as the cause of spiritual destruction. Just as faith and other spiritual realities have a proper "intersubjective reference" (as we shall see), so sin is understood by Marcel as basically the establishment of one's centre in the self. We can only infer from Marcel, in the light of the religious thinking which permeates his philosophy, that sin must be understood in relation to God. One shuts oneself off against others, against the "Universal"<sup>22</sup>, and against God. It is against this sin, so properly of one's own making, that Marcel urges us to strive.

An examination of Marcel's proposition reveals a very definite circularity of thought. This deficiency in reasoning will be seen and noted whenever we meet his notion of the interpenetration of freedom, "availability" and grace. This notion will be considered more fully in the next chapter but it is useful to point out here the way in which Marcel begs the question. Briefly, his argument is as follows. By an initial disponibilité, we open ourselves to the workings of grace which will direct our freedom to opt for an opening of self (through disponibilité) to others, through intersubjectivity and fidelity, and to God through faith. It would seem, then, that the whole operation depends on an initial disponibilité. But one's indisponibilité (the lack of a desired predisposition in favour of the other or of God) may not be completely voluntary. Furthermore, not every person is an extrovert. This is a possibility Marcel has not considered and its lack reinforces the charge that he is an elitist. He does counter the objection (or rather he provides scope for a counter-objection) by asserting that if the initial disponibilité is lacking in one's nature, the insufficiency will have to be supplied by a special grace. But then one's recognition and acceptance of such a "special" grace still depends on disponibilité! The difficulties involved in disentangling the skein of his argument are compounded by the lack of any satisfactory exposition by Marcel of what he means by "grace". This lacuna in his dialectic will also be shown up in the following chapter.<sup>23</sup>

### iii. Marcel and the Death-of-God school as represented by Nietzsche and Sartre

The "final solution" to the problem of God is provided by Nietzsche : the death of God. In Thus Spake Zarathustra the Ugliest Man who murdered God gives as his reason : "He had to die." The Ugliest Man, who typifies that subconscious part of nature which is prone to sin, could not endure

the all-seeing eye of God probing into man's innermost depths, into his most hidden shame.<sup>24</sup> Marcel declares that the death of God meant much more for Nietzsche than it does for Sartre. For the former it heralds the assumption of tremendous responsibilities; for the latter it is merely a cause for triumphant exultation. Marcel observes that the Nietzschean affirmation is infinitely more tragic than Plutarch's "The Great Pan is dead", since it states that we ourselves have killed God.<sup>25</sup> This awareness accounts for the sacred dread with which Nietzsche expresses himself. Whereas, in Sartre's proclamation to the journalists at Geneva in 1946, "Messieurs, Dieu est mort!", the existential tone is absolutely different, Marcel says, precisely because the sacred dread has been replaced by a man "qui prétend établir sa doctrine sur les ruines de quelque chose à quoi il n'a jamais cru."<sup>26</sup> The God killed off by Nietzsche and Sartre is not that of the philosophers but the God of the Christian tradition. With good reason Marcel warns that the history of modern philosophy seems to supply abundant illustrations of the progressive replacement of atheism, in the grammatically privative sense of the word, by an anti-theism whose main-spring is the will that God should not be.<sup>27</sup>

Marcel's reaction to the situation created by Nietzsche and Sartre is to turn the tables on them. He suggests that when we see the misery of man's own making in the world we may be inclined to murmur that it is not God who is dead but that man is in his death-throes. We should do well, Marcel recommends, to use that reflection as a starting-point to find that God is living yet, after all. Offering new hope to a disillusioned world, he declares :

Si l'on peut dire que la mort de Dieu au sens nietzschéen a précédé et rendu possible l'agonie de l'homme à laquelle nous assistons, il reste légitime en un certain sens d'affirmer que c'est de ces cendres de l'homme que Dieu peut et doit ressusciter. (28)

This reflection brings us to a consideration of Marcel's prescription for the resuscitation of God in our lives.

## II. Towards the Rediscovery of God. God as Mystery.

### i. Approaches to a renewal of religion

In a world in which religious indifference would appear to be rife, Marcel affirms that it is necessary to recall the significance in respect to our being of such essential notions as sin, grace and salvation. He fears that these may be too easily dismissed as "old stuff" or even as "obsolete".<sup>29</sup> But, as has already been indicated, his own treatment of

grace is vague and circuitous and, as will be noted, his discussion of sin is minimal.<sup>30</sup> For a proper realization of the import of these notions, he goes on to say, the renewal of the awareness of our being and its integrity should be paralleled by a renewal in the sphere of religion. Just as ontology is concerned with being, religion concerns itself with the relationships within the true ontological communion which is established in God. As far back as December 1930 when, only twenty months after his baptism into the Catholic Church, he delivered his address on contemporary irreligion, Gabriel Marcel proclaimed the need for such a renewal. It should be, however, a renewal which does not mean so much demolishing the existing structure of religion as clearing away the rubble.<sup>31</sup> Marcel expresses himself forcefully on the dangers of an institutionalized Church being corrupted and degraded by fanaticism or by the investment of temporal power. He went so far as to run the risk of shocking those of his co-religionists who, to him, seemed complacent : he stated that he preferred a Church of the Left to one in which its members held their religion as a private reserve.<sup>32</sup>

Today, among the number of those engaged in clearing away the rubble surrounding the structure of religion are to be found certain theologians and philosophers whose zeal may impel to burrow so deeply as to undermine the very foundations of belief.<sup>33</sup> Gabriel Marcel has avoided such excesses. He agrees, none the less, that religion should not degenerate into mythology :

Croire en un Dieu vivant, si ce n'est pas tomber dans la mythologie, c'est dire, non pas exclusivement, mais aussi secondairement que, par exemple, toute atteinte à la justice ou à la charité en la personne de mon prochain est en même temps une atteinte à ce Dieu lui-même, ce qui suppose une relation tout à fait concrète, bien que très mystérieuse entre ce Dieu vivant et cette créature qu'est mon semblable. Si ceci n'était pas admis, cela qu'on prétendait être un Dieu vivant se réduirait du même coup à une idée nécessairement inaltérable et contre laquelle je ne puis pécher. (34)

On the other hand, for the same reasons that he is concerned with the harmful effects on our relationships with ourselves, with others and with God, Marcel does not propose that demythologization should be carried to such extremes that religion finally loses its religious content. God should then be degraded to an abstraction of the worst kind since there is involved a degradation of the highest and at the same time the most profound mystery of being, of our being.

Marcel believes that the resurgence of the idea of God in the modern world will be enhanced by a true appreciation of what is meant by religion. Of fundamental importance is the rôle of man's personal and inviolable freedom. Faith, which is the mainspring of religion, is an existential value of the highest order and as such is to be chosen or rejected absolutely.

## (a) Freedom.

For Gabriel Marcel, freedom is not an end in itself : man is not free simply for the sake of being free. His freedom is in essence availability in favour of grace ~ a participation in being.<sup>35</sup> Man's freedom is oriented towards a "light" which ultimately is transcendental. Marcel establishes the connection between freedom and light in a long but illuminating passage :

La religion, disait Rilke, est "une direction de coeur". Cette définition est certes discutable, mais elle présente, du moins à mes yeux, le grand mérite de mettre en lumière l'existence d'une aimantation spirituelle par laquelle l'être se constitue et se révèle à lui-même. Ce terme d'aimantation est d'ailleurs peu satisfaisant, parce qu'il est emprunté à un domaine où les forces se manifestent comme des contraintes. Ici, il n'en est pas, il ne peut pas en être de même; et d'ailleurs le terme de force convient aussi mal que possible là où il s'agit de traduire l'autorité qu'exercent sur nous des valeurs non point choisies mais reconnues, et qu'il faudrait peut-être définir comme des évidences actives. Je pense, en dernière analyse, que nous sommes libres dans la mesure où nous sommes contrôlés par ces évidences-là, car ces évidences sont comme les foyers à la fois proches et lointains où il nous est donné de nous saisir et nous rassembler. Etre libre, c'est être dans la lumière, dans cette lumière-là. Rentrer dans l'ombre, c'est-à-dire dans le désarroi et dans l'incertitude, avec toute l'indétermination que celle-ci comporte, c'est au contraire reprendre le collier, c'est s'enfoncer dans la servitude. (36)

Along with other contemporary thinkers who may be classified as personalists and/or "existentialist", Marcel recognizes freedom as the chief characteristic of the human person. He differs in asserting that man's unaided freedom of choice is not sufficient of itself to achieve self-fulfilment and ultimately "salvation" which is to be taken as the immortal guarantee of being's integrity. Marcel does not admit that freedom is synonymous with autonomy. He sees the claim of the self-sufficiency of the self-enclosed consciousness (le moi) as antipathetic to communication, to communion, and to truly expansive commitment. For his justification he appeals to the relevancy of human experience : the anonymous "one" (l'on) or the "other" is not created as person without mutual response in commitment. (Too often, however, it seems as if this response to the "presence" of the other is a participation of kindred spirits only.<sup>37</sup>) Along with the personalists Marcel agrees that this commitment is directed to the task of establishing our personality. This task is done neither by the one nor by the other, but by "us". This is what Marcel understands as the true intersubjective relationship, the person-to-person relationship. It is through this intersubjective relationship that I become myself : I need the recognition of the other to maintain myself. Marcel, however, asserts that



personality cannot be exhausted in any one commitment. Personality participates in Being.<sup>38</sup>

Clearly, in Marcel's terms, freedom is an oriented freedom.<sup>39</sup> It is oriented to others and, ultimately, to God; it is founded in Being and oriented towards Being. Marcel is not just concerned with interpersonal relationships for the sake of the common good, but to show how we can "become" persons by transcending the restricted confines of egocentrism (la crispation du moi) in love for other persons and in the free acceptance of a personal relationship with God. And for this acceptance to be actualized, Marcel sees no option but to postulate a grace which can only come from God. This awareness, he reasons, will surely come to one who is "open" to such influences, who is permeable to the "light" in that he is prepared to be enlightened. This is the force of his declaration, cited above, être libre, c'est être dans la lumière. Marcel is yet consistent with his whole metaphysics of being whose impulse is creativity. To be truly free is what he means when he says that freedom involves our recognition of a measure of dependence on God. We are still free to reject this notion of dependence, we are still free to claim autonomy. But this is not authentic freedom in that it is not constitutive of the full development and realization (in the creative sense of the word) of our personality.<sup>40</sup>

The rôle of freedom in religion, then, is to ensure that we actively recognize our dependence on God — once we have made our choice. It can also be seen that, coupled with freedom is grace which enlightens the recognition of our status as creature, and that we share in being which is creative. Closely associated with freedom and, as it were, flowing from it is the rôle of creativity in religion. "Self-creating" is, after all, the achievement of freedom. At once we come back upon the central notion that creativity is the quintessential characteristic of Being.

#### (b) Creativity.

Religion, Marcel asserts, is only for the person who surrenders himself to it, when considerations on faith pass over into faith.<sup>41</sup> Religion, like faith, is not an abstraction. "On ne peut croire dans l'abstrait", Clarisse protests in le Palais de sable, "on ne peut croire dans le vide."<sup>42</sup> Religion is life; it is concerned with life and living. There is a vital need — if it is to remain true to its mission — to concern itself with people.<sup>43</sup> However, Marcel stresses that Christianity must be more than socially-conscious; as a religion its purpose, by definition, is primarily to lead people to God. According to Marcel, there are too many Christians who are too deeply absorbed in the purely social (or sociological) aspect of Christianity. They run the risk of losing sight of what he calls "the

light of the beyond". He notes,

What Berdyaev said about Communism can also be applied to spiritism : it actually developed because of the severe lack of genuine Christian thinking. (44)

To those who would consider that the Church does, or should, concern itself solely with social programmes, Marcel has this to say :

Je crois que ceux qui avec une entière candeur estiment que le christianisme doit être d'abord et avant tout social, que c'est avant tout une doctrine d'entraide, une sorte de philanthropie sublimée, commettent une grave et dangereuse erreur. Ici encore le mot vie se révèle tout chargé d'ambiguïté. Dire "peu importe ce que vous pensez, du moment que vous vivez chrétiennement", c'est, je pense, se rendre coupable de la pire offense envers celui qui a dit "je suis la Voie, la Vérité, et la Vie." (45)

The implication is that the basic concern of religion is God; it is the recognition of dependence on God who is Life. One cannot live a Christian life without the "assistance" of Christ, without taking account of God. While it is true that Marcel's philosophy is one of active participation and trustful intersubjectivity, these elements flow as the practical and creative consequences of the initial activity of belief. Marcel establishes his own priority of values in his investigations and through his own experience. As I see it, Marcel asserts that true personal relationships are really possible only in terms of the recognition of the Absolute Thou as the base of all relationships. It is in this sense that religion is truly creative. For Marcel, man creates himself inasmuch that what he becomes depends on his choices, on his use of freedom. But also, man is a self-transcending subject in the sense that he enters not only the sphere of personal communication with others but through them can be led back to God; he can also affirm his relationship with the Transcendent, with God.

## ii. Marcel's own approach to the "problem" of God

Long before his conversion to Catholicism Marcel had decided that lack of the religious consciousness of man as creature made in the image of his Creator was the fundamental cause of a depersonalization of man in an ever-increasingly functionalized world. When he was still a student, Marcel's enquiries were leading him away from an impersonal and immanent idealism to the recognition of the personal and the transcendental.<sup>46</sup> In the twenty years prior to his conversion (the period he calls his peri-Christian zone), he gradually became aware, in his own mind, of the rôle of the Christian tradition as the source of a "fertilizing principle" for certain lines of thought.<sup>47</sup> Christianity, he declares, does not necessarily supply the philosophical ideas; but it certainly helps make them more intelligible. This realization explains his reply to the objection that his own philo-

sophical ideas are only an unformulated reference to the data of Christianity and as such of little value as a philosophy for those who do not accept Christianity.

Il est très possible que l'existence des données chrétiennes fondamentales soit requise en fait pour permettre à l'esprit de concevoir certaines notions dont j'ai esquissé l'analyse : on ne peut sûrement pas dire que ces notions soient sous la dépendance de la révélation chrétienne, elles ne la supposent pas. (48)

As it happened, Marcel himself experienced considerable difficulty in coping with the dogmatic (Thomist) approach to the discovery of God, especially since it was at this very time (immediately after his baptism) that he was formulating his distinction between existence and objectivity.<sup>49</sup> He concluded that, as far as he is concerned, we cannot argue to the existence of God. That exercise is to make of God an object of thought, a concept. He assures us that he remains convinced that God does not will that he should be adored as some sort of idol, which is as bad as an abstraction.<sup>50</sup> He had already, years before his conversion, studied the possibilities of faith in an unverifiable God and had reached the conclusion that, in effect, religion concerns not an absent God of whom we have some information (whether by argument or revelation), but a God whose living presence can be perceived only faith.<sup>51</sup> Undaunted, therefore, by his innate antipathy for doctrinal codification, Marcel reverted to his own method which is phenomenological in principle, is based on experience, and personalist in epistemology.<sup>52</sup>

### iii. Marcel's method. Preliminary investigations into the nature of Thought

#### A. Primary and secondary reflection : the "existential fulcrum".<sup>53</sup>

As a necessary preliminary to an investigation into the question of God, Gabriel Marcel postulates a distinction within the very notion of thought itself. His initial premiss is that it is a self-evident truth that philosophic thought is by nature and definition reflective.<sup>54</sup> According to Marcel, there is a need, with the increasing encroachment of science into certain preserves of philosophy, to observe a differentiation between two levels of reflection, not contrary to each other but complementary in that each is appropriate in its proper field.<sup>55</sup> In arriving at his division of reflection as "primary" and "secondary", Marcel adapted Bergson's earlier distinction between "open" and "closed", identified by Blondel as pensée pensée (for primary and closed) and pensée pensante (for secondary and open). Marcel further differentiates between "thinking" (penser) and

"thinking of" (penser à).<sup>56</sup>

The first level of reflection is straight thinking (pensée pensée) which bears on essences only.<sup>57</sup> This reflection, which is proper for the analytical sciences, brings about a separation between the thinking subject and the object of his thought. While Marcel concedes that this level of thinking is legitimate in the field of the natural and physical sciences, he insists that it is quite inapplicable in the realm of metaphysics. Because of the very nature of being, the unity of individual beings in themselves and with others cannot be dismembered but must be preserved inviolate.<sup>58</sup> I cannot separate the "I" of the "I am"; existence cannot be predicated. The personal communion which makes me what I am would otherwise be severed in favour of a Cartesian dualism of body and soul. Marcel argues that if this indissolubility applies to me, so much the more does it apply to God, and to my relations with God. Praying, he reasons, is the only way really to think of God. To this statement it may be countered that by praying I must be addressing myself to God; this means that I must be setting him apart from me. What Marcel seems to be stressing is that I should accept God and in my prayer to him I should not concentrate on itemizing his attributes. Any attempt to place God apart in order to subject him to scrutiny is to destroy the mysterious quality of my relationship to God. The conclusion which Marcel urges us to reach is that primary reflection cannot operate in spheres relating to the self and to God. Primary reflection is not the vehicle of metaphysics.

Metaphysics, for Marcel, is concerned not with problems but with mysteries. The primary concern of metaphysical enquiry, on the human level, is the ontological status of the person most intimately involved : myself. This status, Marcel believes, can be defined only in terms of my relationship with God in the fellowship of being (the ontological communion) in which I and all other beings participate. This is the level on which secondary reflection is exercised.

Marcel asserts that secondary reflection meets the need of a recovery of the original unity from which the initial, dispersing reflection departed<sup>59</sup> by reflecting upon that first reflection whose objective conclusions we decline to accept as definitive. Reflection is thereby elevated to a higher register, it is a reflection "à la deuxième puissance". This inverse, recuperative movement is oriented towards being so that the unity of participation and experience is grasped in "la morsure du réel" and restored in the concrete beyond the disjointed determinations of abstract thought.<sup>60</sup> This reconstructive reflection "grafted on" a critical (primary) reflection is recuperative only through a reciprocal intuition which, on account of its being latent in our consciousness, Marcel calls a "blindfold" (aveuglée) intuition of our ontological condition. It would appear, then, that second-

ary reflection can be pursued only on condition of man's awareness of the ontological need. If we "sense" that there must be being (this must be the meaning of this latent, aveuglée, intuition), we have already realized that there is a need for being.

Although Marcel affirms that secondary reflection is intuitive, so that thought can be fruitful only when prolonged into reflection, Marcel generally distrusts philosophical doctrines which claim to be based on intuition alone. What is in question here is not so much an intuition as a calm yet firm assurance

qui se confond avec ce que nous appelons notre âme.<sup>61</sup>

This assurance is acquired not so much by introversion as by conversion, by which, in this context, Marcel means the movement towards the light, the light of truth and, in final analysis, towards the Light which is Truth.<sup>62</sup>

This secondary reflection is indeed re-collection and at the same time recollection (as used in the spiritual sense) insofar as it is capable of thinking about itself.<sup>63</sup> "Secondary reflection" and "recollection" are terms used synonymously by Marcel; recollection is not to be understood as a passive state conducive to reflection but the activity itself.

Thus we can see how Marcel's ontology is easily transformed into natural theology. The reflective process of recovery is more properly "syneidetic", encompassing the totality of being. The affirmant is enlightened because his recollection has been transcended so as to encompass the totality of being.<sup>64</sup> For Marcel, recollection is indispensable : it is by re-collecting our thoughts that ontological reflection is made possible as a natural progression. It may be not what is most spectacular in the soul, he says, for

il ne consiste pas à regarder quelque chose, il est  
une reprise, une réflexion intérieure, (65)

but he himself is convinced of its value :

Je suis convaincu pour ma part qu'il n'y a pas  
d'ontologie possible, c'est-à-dire d'appréhension du  
mystère ontologique, à quelque degré que ce soit,  
que pour un être capable de se recueillir. (66)

Its spiritual value and importance are no less. Nearly twenty years after affirming,

il semble que le salut ne puisse résider que dans  
la contemplation. Je ne crois pas que ceci puisse  
être dépassé, (67)

he was as firmly sure :

J'en demeure intimement convaincu, et c'est le sens  
de tout ce que j'ai écrit près de cinquante ans :  
la réflexion est notre seul recours. (68)

It is clear from this sample of statements that Marcel is consistent in this matter of the worth and efficacy of secondary reflection as recollection. All the while, of course, he insists on the necessity and primacy of personal freedom in this wholly existential exercise. That we choose "correctly"

is a consequence of grace welcomed by a soul who is "disponible". Speaking of the recuperative power of secondary reflection, Marcel reminds us :

Il faut ajouter que cette vertu propre à la réflexion ne peut guère se manifester que grâce à la médiation d'autrui. Mais cette médiation est essentiellement spirituelle; elle est offerte, ou elle se propose à nous, mais nous avons toujours à la reconnaître et à l'accueillir, il nous reste toujours possible de la refuser. (69)

The act of recollecting oneself is both a grasp of the self (prise de soi) and a relaxation of tension (détente) "en présence de -".<sup>70</sup> One can only infer from all that he has to say on the matter that Marcel implies "in the presence of God". It is characteristic of him that the sentence is unfinished, but it is to God that his ontology leads, even if Marcel is not prepared to supply the name. For Gabriel Marcel, it must be remembered, "Being" is more an act than a state; the word is to be understood in its verbal sense. He is, therefore, reluctant to give a positive identification of Being and God for it is normal to think of God in a substantival sense. Marcel considers that to name God is in some way to restrict him, to "objectify" him in the same way as the traditional proofs.<sup>71</sup>

Marcel speaks of recollection (recueillement) rather than "prayer". The latter term, he thinks, has, in a purely philosophical context, ambiguous overtones uncongenial to many who are "right-minded" without being confessed adherents of any religion or denomination.<sup>72</sup> Recollection is possible, he claims, to anyone who has freed himself of the ontologically deadening influence of a world given over to functionalization, a world which seems, to Marcel, to be founded on a refusal to reflect.<sup>73</sup> Imitating the detachment of the saint (not the uninterested isolation of the spectator) such a man can and must withdraw in silence into the depths of the inner self in order to gain a better awareness of his condition as participation in being, as participation in Being.

In la Fin des temps Mélanie, who is not religiously inclined, takes pity on the expatriate Hungarian, Sandor, who is suffering from both his shabby surroundings and the workings of his conscience. She advises him :

Comme tu souffres! Laisse-moi te tenir la main. Et restons quelques minutes sans parler. J'ai remarqué, même si l'on ne prie pas, on est autrement lorsqu'on a fait le silence en soi. (74)

Silence is as conducive to prayer or to contemplation as it is to philosophical reflection or to music. It is in contemplation, Marcel affirms, that the soul can strengthen its grip on the real<sup>75</sup> which, for it, is the realization that its true destiny is to be reunited in communion with God.

Despite his reluctance to use religious or theological vocabulary, Marcel cannot avoid such terms as soul, grace, charity, faith and hope.<sup>76</sup> It may be that this reluctance on his part derives from his fear of being

dismissed by "professional" philosophers as being as theological as the neo-Thomists. However, he does suggest that there should be a "secret convergence" of philosophy and theology, stipulating at the same time that the instrument is different in each case. For religion the instrument is faith, for philosophy it is reflection.<sup>77</sup> Indeed, reflection assumes quasi-theological dimensions in the framework of Marcel's metaphysics since it is essential for any approach to the ontological mystery inasmuch as reflection regains contact with Being.<sup>78</sup>

#### B. Problem and Mystery.

The next stage in the propaedeutics of Being is the classical Marcellian distinction between problem and mystery. His postulation of the notion of mystery is the crystallization of his earlier thoughts on the notion of the "unverifiable".

In Marcel's terms, a problem belongs to the order of objectivity. It consists of certain facts presented in disorder which, when I have sorted it out, fall into an orderliness capable of satisfying the requirements of thought and thereby are open to solution.<sup>79</sup> The problematic process of enquiry is legitimate in such fields of pragmatic investigation as the sciences, and even in certain areas affecting man, e.g. medicine. But, generally, any claim to validity for treating of the "problem" of man - and more so of God - is a transgression into the domain of philosophical knowledge. Then the problematic process pretends, through its tendency to categorize, to equate all values with techniques and, by reducing all matters pertinent to man's being to the level of objective problems, it involves a depersonalization of man. Marcel implies that man would then be denied a soul, so that his full ontological status should be impaired.<sup>80</sup> This full ontological status is a sharing in being, and ultimately, as creative creature, it is a participation in the Being (Creativity) of God.

If there is a danger in treating man as a soluble problem, there will be the risk of treating God, in a similar anthropomorphic manner, as a problem. A constant danger is the temptation to balk at proceeding to secondary reflection, which is of the order of the "metaproblematic" (mystery), and so to degrade mysteries by converting them into problems.<sup>81</sup> All the great existential realities, in Marcel's view, by virtue of their inseparable intimacy with the enquiring subject, are mysteries and not problems; they admit of no ready-made solutions. Given Marcel's interpretation of metaphysical thought as reflection trained on mystery, there can be no progress (in the sense understood by the clinical analysts) in this sort of thinking; there is progress only in problematic thought.<sup>82</sup> Secondary reflection does not aim at producing results but is more an exploratory

line of thought into those questions in which the questioner is so closely and intimately involved that he cannot set himself apart for an objective study. In Marcel's view, the primary metaphysical and ontological question, "What am I?", is the example par excellence of the need to pass on to a higher level of reflection, to pass from the problematic to the metaproblematic. We may, therefore, trace an anterior hierarchy from questions about our own being and being in general to Being in particular. This I intend to explore through Marcel's dialectic.

Un mystère c'est un problème qui empiète sur ses propres données, qui les envahit et se dépasse par là comme simple problème. (83)

Such is Marcel's classic description of mystery. Fundamental in the realm of existence is the problem of being. But because of the inseparable and indivisible nature of its component elements and the status of the person involved, being is the example par excellence of the metaphysical mystery. Being is, therefore, not a problem at all but a mystery. In the question "What am I?" both subject and object interpenetrate in such a way that an objectified judgment is impossible.<sup>84</sup> Mystery, Marcel explains, is something in which I am caught up, in which I am engagé<sup>85</sup>, not partially but entirely. I cannot dissociate myself from it and adopt the role of an outsider, a spectator; I am totally immersed in it. Only something which affects my own being so closely as to be bound up inseparably with it can qualify as mystery.<sup>86</sup>

The absolute mystery is God himself.<sup>87</sup> It is, according to Marcel's dialectic, incorrect to speak of the "problem" of God. Once we consider the question of God we find that no objective criteria can be applied to him. In the question of God we soon realize that all the data encroaches upon itself, inevitably and irresistibly. This is the reasoning behind Marcel's objections to the "proofs" for God's existence, as will be given in the next chapter. God's "existence" does not admit of intellectual "proof"; any attempt at such a proof remains problematic, on the level of primary reflection. Because we participate in being which has its source in God, we have to acknowledge, without adopting pantheism, by the use of secondary reflection, that our own being (rather than existence) is intimately bound up with God's. As Owen says, "Human persons are only partially mysterious; God is wholly so."<sup>88</sup> Marcel himself says as much :

J'avais écrit, il y a bien longtemps : quand nous parlons de Dieu, ce n'est pas de Dieu que nous parlons, et cette phrase garde pour moi son poids existentiel. Je suis de plus en plus convaincu que si parler de Dieu veut dire le définir, en énumérer les attributs, etc., on est conduit à élaborer une théologie qui se recommande à coup sûr d'ancêtres vénérables, mais qui ne peut qu'être en contradiction avec nos exigences les plus imprescriptibles. (89)



### III. The Religious Element in Marcel's Ontology.

#### i. In his terminology

Critics of Marcel's terminology also charge him with failing to distinguish adequately between philosophy and theology. At least Marcel is not guilty of flooding the philosophical market with neologisms to the extent of Sartre or Heidegger. His principal contribution in this matter is the term disponibilité. Rather Marcel is criticised for the connotations - religious, mystical or subjective - with which he invests certain terms already accepted in their "traditional" meanings. The difficulty lies in the need for thinkers to use the "current coin of intellectual exchange"<sup>90</sup> if they are to be intelligible to their contemporaries. Marcel's own difficulty is to give fresh significance to such terms as "mystery", the "Absolute" (as in "the Absolute Thou") and, with it, the "Transcendent".<sup>91</sup>

#### (a) "Mystery".

Given the fact that I exist, not every question which affects me intimately need be "mysterious"<sup>92</sup>, if by that is meant "incomprehensible". Of course, we may concede that whenever we come into contact with the infinite, we are in the realm of the mysterious. For, as Marcel interprets metaphysics, God is the infinite mystery of metaphysics. But God's infinity cannot be considered identical with the mathematical  $\infty$ ; the infinity of mathematics can only be analogous to the divine infinity. Now, if "mystery" is not to be taken in a rational sense, nor as secret, a pseudo-problem, the agnostic's and the idealist's "unknowable"<sup>93</sup>, we are left with the early connotation of  $\mu\upsilon\sigma\tau\eta\rho\iota\omicron\nu$  not only as a religious secret but as a sacrament. If this is Marcel's acceptance of the word, it could be stated that the all-embracing mystery of being is conferred upon us in a sacramental fashion. Does this mean that, despite his confessed avoidance of theology, Marcel is in fact transgressing his own self-imposed limits and delving at least into a quasi-theology?

His reply is not very satisfactory and at best illustrates his penchant for evasion. Marcel asserts that there is no question of confusing those mysteries that are developed in human experience as such with those mysteries which are revealed (e.g. the Incarnation or the Redemption) and to which no effort of thought bearing on experience can enable us to attain. From his own standpoint, the distinction between the natural and the supernatural must be rigorously maintained.<sup>94</sup> It would seem that there are natural mysteries and supernatural mysteries. Does this mean that the "natural mysteries" belong to a natural theology and the "supernatural mysteries" belong to a "professional" (i.e. classical) theology? If so, his use of the term "mystery" is quite reconcilable with the religious conno-

tation of *μυστήριον* as a sacrament.<sup>95</sup> As I interpret Marcel's use of the term, its relevance is shown in his plea for a recognition of the "sacral" character of life. But at the same time, because it appears to belong to a natural theology, his use of the term reinforces, and seems to confirm, the claims that he is not wholly neutral and that he allows a strong religious bias to influence his philosophy. At best Marcel's "mystery" may be described as metempirical and this would be very close to the agnostic's "Unknowable". But Marcel vehemently repudiates any charge of agnosticism. Despite his reluctance, so curiously inconsistent in a philosopher who insists on commitment, Marcel must be classed as a religious thinker.

(b) "Absolute" and "Transcendent".

Marcel has been criticized for his identification of God as Absolute (Transcendent) Thou. Both Sweeney and Verneaux, for example, take issue with him on the use of these terms. For Sweeney, the phrase is contradictory since a "thou" is one understood in relation to another, which would disqualify the predication of "absolute".<sup>96</sup> For Verneaux, the definite article in "the Absolute Thou" reveals a measure of objectification and the only possible subjective relationship could be situated in the personal invocation of the Absolute Thou as Recourse.<sup>97</sup> Once again, the difficulty arises from the choice and range of language available. Certainly, if one is to propose any dialectic, there must be some measure of systematization. If we are to speak of the Transcendent we cannot avoid "objectifying" it, no matter how much we may insist on its unique, unverifiable nature.<sup>98</sup>

These are, when all is said and done, not very serious criticisms of Marcel's stubbornness. This issues from his avowed crusade against the spirit of objectivity. In his determination to avoid the pitfalls of abstractionism and impersonalism, Marcel does appear to exaggerate their snares. He rescues himself from the opposite danger of subjectivism by elevating his adherence to personal and immediate experience to the level of intersubjectivity. From this level he feels he can authentically philosophize. The danger in this, however, is that his intersubjective experiences may be dictated by common emotions so that they are transmitted in terms tantamount to a subjectivist attitude. Marcel does express uneasiness over the term "Absolute Thou". There must be, he urges, no question of enclosing God within the circle of his relations with the individual; God cannot be a sort of ideal limit to which all love tends.<sup>99</sup> Marcel's solution to this dilemma is to postulate a distinction between existence and objectivity so that existence cannot be treated as a demonstrandum. The question of existence, he adds not altogether helpfully, cannot be given an absolute answer once and for all.<sup>100</sup>

## ii. Marcel's use of negative theology

Negative theology is recognized as a preparatory aspect of a natural theology. Verneaux charges<sup>101</sup> that Marcel tends towards a negative theology with the result that there is nothing positive about his approach to God. Marcel himself gives some thought to the matter of his reliance on negative theology without, however, providing any really satisfactory rebuttal.

He recognizes that his famous phrase, "Quand nous parlons de Dieu, ce n'est pas de Dieu que nous parlons", could be construed as negative theology even if he points out that what he is trying to emphasize is that God cannot be treated as an object. His aim, he pleads, had been to show that it was possible to believe in the reality of God while yet refusing him existence. One can deny God's existence but not his reality; this, Marcel argues, reveals the apparent contradiction of a real but non-existent God.<sup>102</sup> He goes on to say that this position can be clarified by the idea of attestation, but his explanatory example is not really relevant to the matter and as such lacks the appeal of validity. From his own experience, Marcel assures us, he could believe in the faith of others while as yet he did not admit sharing their faith. That is all very well, but it does not follow - as he claims - that their example points to God's reality. One can believe in another's "faith" that the world is flat or at the centre of the planetary system, but it does not follow that the earth is so designed or situated.

The vocation of the existentialist philosopher, Marcel suggests, is to bear witness to value and certainly to being.<sup>103</sup> For Christian philosophy the God who is witnessed is not the god of the philosophers but the God whose characteristic is holiness : he is the Deus Sanctus.<sup>104</sup> This latter statement, heavily larded with religious feeling, brings Marcel back to the original question, which is a consideration of whether his natural theology is negative. His attempted reply is evasive :

C'est une question de savoir si cette affirmation ressortit encore ou non à la théologie négative. C'est là un point sur lequel je ne me prononcerai pas de façon catégorique. Je dirai du reste qu'à mes yeux, c'est avant tout un problème de définition. (105)

As an aid in this enquiry, he stresses that true existentialist philosophy should be founded on dialogue, and that our relations with others should be on the level of the "second person".<sup>106</sup> According to Marcel, it is through this personalist epistemology, which is positive and not negative, that we may approach the recovery of God. This proposition leads us to the next chapter in which Marcel's whole dialectic is aligned with this dialogical approach to the Mystery of Being, and in which we shall see how this same approach leads, in his view, to a more complete awareness of the Mystery of God.

## Conclusion.

It is precisely because his philosophy is an approach to the Mystery of Being that Marcel leaves himself to the criticism that his metaphysics is at best a propaedeutics of the Ontological Mystery. He appears reluctant to formulate concepts and to establish a definitive "summa ontologiae". Even at the end of his investigations into the meaning of the Mystery of Being, which he promises at the outset of his Gifford Lectures, Marcel still evades a positive definition of Being. In one sense, the Mystery of Being remains a mystery. It is presumably because of the incomplete nature of his work that he has not rated a mention in some studies of contemporary philosophy - even of the existentialist school<sup>107</sup> - or at most only a brief chapter.

Through his fundamental distinctions between having and being, primary and secondary reflection, problem and mystery, he has undoubtedly done much to pave the way for a more elaborately expounded presentation of metaphysics considered as the philosophical study of beings as they are in themselves and in their concrete totality. Marcel is like John the Baptist : the precursor rather than the teacher of precepts. His philosophy is not a set of expounded concepts, it is more a reflection on being and existence. He indicates areas for further enquiry or just meditation without always pursuing his first line of thought. Perhaps this is what he means by his "heuristic" or "maieutic" method; he sees himself more as a philosophical mid-wife than as a "father of a philosophical school". As Etienne Gilson remarks : Marcel's philosophy seems to tend spontaneously towards a metaphysics of the act of existing without ever attaining it.<sup>108</sup>

Marcel himself recognizes and accepts this criticism. Yet while he envies those who may have written the book he had originally proposed or who have formulated in a more systematic manner certain aspects of his own ideas<sup>109</sup>, he defends himself by asserting that the true philosopher lives in a state of continual intellectual creativity since his thought is being called in question from one moment to the next.<sup>110</sup> The philosopher, after all, is a lover of wisdom; he should not claim to possess wisdom.

On n'est pas sage, on tend à le devenir. (111)

Like any man, the philosopher is also homo viator; he is always on the move towards that ultimate enlightenment which apparently can be found only in the "other kingdom". Perhaps, Marcel suggests, there is a basic misunderstanding at the core of his commentators' criticism, a misunderstanding which is to be found as much in himself as in them. In the course of a lecture given in 1938 he speaks of his commentators :

C'est curieux, leur manière de me comprendre; ce n'est pas du tout de la sorte que je me comprenais moi-même.

And he concedes wryly,

Après tout, c'est peut-être bien eux qui ont raison. (112)

## FOOTNOTES TO CHAPTER TWO

1. ME II 175.
2. Marcel declares that the anthropomorphic god of superhuman qualities, at the centre of the "god for good people" of the deists, is an inheritance of the "Copernican revolution" in philosophy which sets up a new anthropocentric theory, but which differs from the original in that it no longer considers man as a being but rather as a complex of epistemological functions (EA II 12). G. Gusdórf, in *Mythe et métaphysique* (Paris, 1923), 221, speaks of "the rationalistic evaporation of God". We may say that Marx, Engels and Feuerbach brought about the dissipation of a rationalistic God. As shall be seen later in the text and again in Chapter 4, Marcel says much the same of the God disposed of by Sartre. The leading English representative of the latter-day agnostics was Herbert Spencer, to whom Marcel alludes (EA I 75). In Marcel's view, Spencer's closest French counterpart is Julien Benda. Benda's infinite God, Marcel concludes, is neither perfect nor imperfect, and his indeterminate Being is somewhat similar to Spencer's Unknowable (EA I 78-85). Marcel provides as the "fundamental difference" between theism and deism: "Whereas deism does not rise above the idea of a certain moral entity, of a supreme and all-wise Being who in a general way controls the destiny of the universe, theism asserts the existence of a personal God - I shall even say of a living God with whom a concrete Ego is able to get into touch." ("Theism and Personal Relations" in *Crosscurrents*, 1950, p. 35).
3. HP 26. cf. HCH 195.
4. EA II 12.
5. If the level of knowledge reached in former times is comparatively childish, Marcel suggests that we may well ask if childhood does not have its own values to be prized - for example, trustfulness and candour (EA II 14). In the connection of "modern enlightenment" and "changing morality", it is to be noted that Marcel gave his comments on what he saw as "Contemporary Irreligion" thirty years before the revival of interest in Whitehead's "process-philosophy", taken up, explicitly, by Charles Hartshorne and, implicitly, by Leslie Dewart. We can safely assume, from the tenor of his comments on irreligion and from his indebtedness to the Fathers of the Church, that Marcel is as opposed to any process-philosophy or process-theology.
6. EA II 12 (his lecture, "Remarques sur l'irréligion contemporaine", was delivered, 4 December 1930, to the Fédération des Associations d'Etudiants chrétiens). cf. RPR 43. It should be borne in mind that in any age there are to be found in juxtaposition opposing trends and doctrines. The difference between two contemporaries may be greater than the difference between two men separated more distantly in time. In his conception of the Absolute Mind or *Noûs* Hegel is closer to Aristotle (EA II 16) than he is to Kierkegaard. Gabriel Marcel is far closer to Saint Augustine than he is to Jean-Paul Sartre. The term "man of the twentieth (or any) century" is ambiguous. There is no really universal "modern" man. (Sartre declares flatly that there is no such thing as human nature, anyway.) Human nature does not change, even if a period of time may be dominated by some particular outlook.
7. cf. EA II 23. See Chapter 1, p. 19 and Conclusion, pp. 206-209.
8. The historical element has always influenced German thought since the beginning of the last century, and can be seen operating in the philosophical approaches of Hegel and Dilthey.
9. EPC 99.
10. EA II 36.

11. EA II 39. He explains that a generalized translation of biological properties may be useful within the domain of those sciences related to the study of human and animal behaviour, but it loses its experimental status and cannot claim to give an objective analysis of life once life is recognized as a spiritual force rather than as a phenomenal process.
12. e.g. "Le propre de la valeur est en effet d'assumer une certaine fonction par rapport à la vie, et comme de lui apposer son sceau" (HV 187; cf. PI 158, 124, HP 44-45) ; "Je pense que l'idée chrétienne de la valeur infinie des âmes est au fond la simple négation de la croyance à un prix des êtres" (JM 286; cf. HCH 122, PI 105, PE 87-88, HV 187-190, ME II 43). See Chapter 1, pp. 18-20 and Chapter 6.
13. For Maritain's "sixth way" see his Approaches to God (tr.), 59-65. It appears to be a mixture of the Augustinian (and even Neo-Platonic) notion of Idea, of Thomist causality, and of Tillichian "non-being", cf. Chapter 3, fn 18.
14. EA II 43-44. cf. HV 109, ME II 175. In this way, Marcel contrives to reconcile the claims of the essentialists and the existentialists. The initial "I am" may be interpreted as the "essence" which precedes my actual existence. At the same time, once I exist it is my "project" (to use Sartre's term for one's aim in life) to make or develop my character or "essence". Marcel says that he is not interested in becoming involved in the controversy over the relative priorities. The important thing is that we do exist (having come into existence through life which has been given to us) and it is up to us to make something meaningful of our life. For Marcel's interpretation of "essence" see Appendix 1, p. 218.
15. John Keats, letter of 28 April 1819, quoted by Marcel (EA II 44) who tells us that when Keats declares in the same letter that "as various as the Lives of Men are - so various become their souls, and thus does God make individual beings, Souls, Identical Souls, of the sparks of his own essence," "il a en vue l'idée même que j'exprime ici; idée qui dans son langage à lui prend un éclat et une fraîcheur incomparable" (EA II 45).
16. EA II 97 and Saint Paul, I Corinthians 6 : 19. cf. EA I 88, 109, 117, 136, 142, 162, PACMO 63-64, EPC 121, ME I 152, 154, 163, 169, 180-181, 182.
17. EA II 22. This trend, Marcel says, appears as a progression from the first (that of "modern" enlightenment). Most people, he declares hopefully, would agree that the progress of enlightenment cannot take place without a progressive elimination of the anthropocentric element. But, he warns, this outlook only seems to be satirizing human pride; it is in fact exalting it. This exaltation, he goes on to say, stems from man's claim that Science, the laboratory of the Mind and Thought (both depersonalized), can and does transcend the material world to which man is reduced (EA II 15).
18. ST 299, PR-GM 100. Philosophy, the mother of the sciences, gave birth to experimental science, nurturing it so protectively that for centuries it stunted its child's development and impeded its expansion. Now it would seem that science has indeed come of age and, flexing its "physic(al)" muscles, is making philosophy pay in much the same coin. This, it would seem, is the contemporary situation as Marcel sees it. While it is generally conceded that scientific questions cannot be answered by philosophy, it is not always allowed that the converse obtains equally. Philosophical questions - and especially those concerned with man's being - are not material for the laboratory objectification of science. This is the force of Marcel's argument. Even Comte admitted that science is interested in what is, not why it is. Science can account for many things in the world of phenomena but it cannot arrogate to itself the same techniques for elucidating

why everything is or exists. Although it is true that technology has increased our power, Marcel reminds us (without giving examples) to think of the price paid for such victories (EA II 23). He suggests that by looking upon the world as a subjugated slave, we tend to consider natural disasters as vengeful retaliations of a monster. And a world entertaining this pantheistic view has reverted to that of Thales of Miletus. Our modern world is "full of gods", be they class- or race-consciousness, capitalism, or collectivism. As Etienne Gilson comments (God and Philosophy, 136) : "Millions of men are starving and bleeding to death because two or three pseudoscientific or pseudosocial deified abstractions are now at war. For when gods fight among themselves, men have to die."

19. EA II 35.
20. P. Claudel, Conversations dans le Loir-et-Cher, 253-270.
21. See Chapter 1, p. 19.
22. When it is said that Marcel's philosophy tends towards universality, it does not mean that it tends towards universalism. His philosophy rests on the indissoluble unity of faith, hope and love within a concrete ontology wherein each individual is thought of as actively participating. Of ourselves, we are in no position to know whether we shall all be saved; that is God's prerogative although our salvation or damnation depends on our own activity. The claim of universality is impossible to define, says Marcel, and he recognizes the true worth of Christian philosophy and theology as having established it in the foundations of our being. "Mais l'exigence d'universalité est imprescriptible; la philosophie et la théologie chrétiennes authentiques ont la gloire impérissable non seulement de ne l'avoir jamais méconnue, mais de l'avoir au contraire portée à son comble et fondée sur les assises indestructibles de l'être" (HV 33). This pronouncement will prepare us for a study of the religious element in Marcel's thought (pp. 59-61) and of his affinity with classical Christian tradition. cf. Chapter 3, pp. 76-78.
23. See Chapter 3, p. 87 and Chapter 4, pp. 107-108.
24. F. Nietzsche, Also Sprach Zarathustra (Nietzsche's Werke, Leipzig, 1904, Band VI), 387 : " 'Aber er - musste sterben: er sah mit Augen, welche Alles sahn, - er sah des Menschen Tiefen und Gründe, alle seine verhelte Schmach und Hässlichkeit.' "
25. HP 27; Marcel quotes from Nietzsche's Joyful Wisdom. " 'Wohin ist Gott? ... ich will es euch sagen! Wir haben ihn getödtet - ihr und ich! Wir Alle sind seine Mörder!' " - F. Nietzsche, Die fröhliche Wissenschaft (Nietzsche's Werke, Leipzig, 1900, Band V), III, 125, p. 163.
26. HP 30. cf. HCH 81-82. The American school of the Death-of-God movement, represented by Altizer, Hamilton and van Buren, seems to want to retain the label "Christian", yet ally themselves with Sartre in their optimism of self-sufficiency. They proclaim that man is liberated in order to assume his own creative responsibility. While Nietzsche proposed a biological evolution of supermen capable of replacing God, Sartre considers that man already has the potential. Marcel warns that man will either claim for himself a self-dependence which caricatures that of God or will think of himself as a waste-product in an absurd universe (HCH 54-55; cf. HCH 88). Sartre, of course, sees no peril in the first alternative ; it is the natural consequence of man's liberation from God, but because his aspiration to divinity is doomed on account of his finitude, his conclusion bears out Marcel's second alternative (cf. L'Etre et le Néant, 495, 653, 708, 717). Marcel brands Sartre's theory as nihilistic since it dissolves into an "éthique de la désinvolture" (HP 151) whereby man chooses his own values, irrespective of the values of others.

27. ME II 177, 86. In the latter passage he adds, referring to Sartre: "son athéisme a besoin d'un dieu pour ne pas tomber dans la platitude absolue."
28. HV 219. cf. HCH 17, 177, "Theism and Personal Relations", loc. cit., p. 41.
29. EA II 46 : "Le péché, la grâce, le salut ne sont des vieilleries que tant que ce sont des mots, et non pas des choses, le coeur même de notre destin." cf. EA II 9-10.
30. See p. 47 and Chapter 4, p. 108.
31. EA II 46-47. Marcel defines religion as constituting a realm where the subject is confronted with something over which he has no hold at all (EA II 28). Such a definition, if it can be called such, is very vague and bears little resemblance to the religion understood by both theologians and counter-theologians. It is, for Marcel, a "mystery" in that it escapes the techniques of objectification. Religion, he tries to explain, restores to us the realization that, after the phrase of Augustine, the more we know the more we become aware of how much we have yet to know. Under the influence of modern facilities provided by technology for the gratification of hedonistic pursuits we have lost a "relish for eternity" (the phrase is that of R.A. Knox). Marcel deplors that we have lost touch with the fundamental truth that knowledge requires a previous purification ( *ἀσκησις* ) and the medieval consciousness of the "sacral" character of life, together with the acknowledgment of Him who is at the source of life.
32. HCH 9, 23, 43, 103, 107, 183-184, ST 244, SdI 259, RPR 172 (Postface). Examples of rigid or authoritarian views of Christianity in Marcel's plays are Moirans in le Palais de sable and Padre Ricardo in Rome n'est plus dans Rome.
33. These are those who have joined the detail in the basement, enthusiastically purging the mythical from the concept of God. The strenuous and rather belaboured efforts of J.A.T. Robinson and others like him at demythologizing a "God out there", a God indifferent to his creation - apart from rare interventions - are justified even if one has reservations about the sound effects accompanying their toils. Marcel agrees that a deus otiosus with a penchant to show himself occasionally as a deus ex machina is spurious (cf. ST 263).
34. ME II 133-134.
35. HP 70-71. See Chapter 1, fn 77 (p. 35) for text.
36. "Aperçus sur la liberté", article by Marcel in la Nef, 1946, 1, pp. 72-73.
37. See Chapter 3, pp. 81-83 for his notion of "presence". For further comments on this feature of elitism, see Chapter 4, p. 129 (fn 23) and Chapter 6, p. 184.
38. HV 31.
39. Sartre's freedom is unoriented in the sense that there is no objective value correlative to the human will. For Sartre, values are not recognized by man but determined by him. Man is an alien in the world of being, and others are just as alien to him as he is to them ("L'enfer c'est les autres"). Marcel, as can be seen, is entirely opposed to such a nihilistic doctrine of freedom.
40. The objection could be made that by postulating grace as the operational element Marcel is quietist. From a consideration of the thesis that Marcel's notion of being is that it is creative, it is possible to clear him of this charge; we can state that his notion of freedom is not akin to quietism. For quietism advocates the passive acceptance of a grace which is expected to operate of its own accord. Furthermore, in



this connection, Marcel's philosophical treatises and plays are free of Jansenism (but cf. Chapter 4, fn 23, p. 129). His characters may be hesitant, doubtful and groping but they are not resigned to the inevitable. The same existential anguish (channelled into the ontological question "What am I?") animates them in varying degrees. They are seeking to know themselves in order to "become" complete, fulfilled. Whereas Sartre maintains that, by virtue of our condition, we are perpetually obliged to make choices, Marcel counters that man's need is to strive to create himself so that he may become increasingly responsible. (But this does not mean that Marcel would subscribe unreservedly - if at all - to Dewart's concept of "self-creation".) It is possible, Marcel points out, that one may choose to be a coward, to put himself in a state of self-abdication which is hardly compatible with self-asserting freedom. Such a man is an example of one who has abandoned himself to the forces working at his own dehumanization (ST 128). Freedom is dynamic. We recall that Marcel says "I have to be" and "I have to become free" are closely related. It is, he suggests, grace which enables us to make the "correct" choice. This grace cannot be given if we do not will to accept our status of creature, that we are dependent on God who is our creator, the source of being which is itself creative. Grace gives us the strength (and enlightenment) to continue striving for self-fulfilment. This is the "correct" choice, as Marcel sees it : to opt for transcendence and to use our efforts so that they may be channelled into our fulfilled communion in the Fellowship of Being.

41. JM 84. cf. FP 73. See Chapter 4.
42. PdS 268, quoted JM 85. cf. Chapter 4, pp. 115-116.
43. As far back as 1912 Marcel had seen this truth : "Les hommes se traitent les uns les autres comme des morts, en ce sens qu'ils se traitent comme des formules complexes mais réalisées. La religion consiste au contraire à se traiter les uns les autres comme des vivants" (Ms XIII [Notes de 1912-1913] 39). In l'Insondable Edith Lechevallier charges the abbé Séveilhac with brandishing the dogmatic approach to a moralising religion. If all that counts is the meriting of heaven, she says, it is not worth the trouble to believe in God. The only worthwhile religion, for her, is "celle qui nous introduit dans un autre monde où les misérables barrières qui séparent les êtres de chair s'évanouissent dans l'amour et dans la charité" (PI 229).
44. Schg 71. cf. HCH 184.
45. EA II 47-48.
46. TM II 207.
47. PACMO 90.
48. PACMO 89. Although he had not read Kierkegaard at that time, Marcel also understood that Christianity is not just pure doctrine but lived experience. This is not to say that he fails to appreciate the role of the Church. Far from it. The Church is the embodiment of communion. Marcel accepts the comments of Yves Congar on the familial unity of the Church (EPC 291-294), and sees the Church as the perpetuation of the sublime witness of Christ (EA I 119). He would agree that the Christian liturgy is peculiarly effective in eliciting participation from its adherents. More important is his recognition that the doctrine of the Mystical Body is the translation into theological terms of the philosophic "ontological communion" (HCH 141).
49. Years later he confessed that, despite Maritain's efforts to instruct him in certain aspects of Thomist doctrine, he was in no way converted to that type of thought (DH 112). Nor was it necessarily the ponderous erudition of Garrigou-Lagrange which dissatisfied him. The simple fact is that he had already adopted his own method of philosophizing. For his important distinction between existence and objectivity, see Chapter 1, fn 84 (p. 36).

50. cf. "La dominante existentielle dans mon oeuvre", loc. cit., 175 : "En admettant que nous ayons le droit de dire quoique ce soit sur ce que Dieu attend de nous, je dirai qu'il ne peut pas vouloir être adoré par nous comme un souverain ou respecté comme un magistrat"; and EA I 169 : "Ma conviction la plus intime, la plus ébranlable, c'est que Dieu ne veut nullement être aimé par nous contre le créé, mais glorifié à travers le créé et en partant de lui ... Ce Dieu dressé contre le créé et en quelque sorte jaloux de ses propres ouvrages n'est à mes yeux qu'une idole."
51. Through faith, Marcel tells us, we sense the "vertigineuse proximité" of God (EA I 27). As God is both deus revelatus and deus absconditus, so Being, which is manifested only in finite things, both hides and reveals itself at the same time.
52. This decision is an application of what Edward de Bono calls "lateral thinking". The expression "personalist epistemology" is used, not by Marcel himself, but is applied to him by Paul Ricoeur (Gabriel Marcel et Karl Jaspers : Philosophie du mystère et philosophie du paradoxe, 49) and Jeanne Delhomme (in Existentialisme chrétien : Gabriel Marcel, ed. Ricoeur, 139).
53. ME I 91.
54. Reflection, in the philosophical sense, is never exercised on those things which are not worth the trouble of thinking about (ME I 93).
55. ST 33.
56. EA I 36-37.
57. It would appear that Marcel is here understanding "essence" in the Thomist sense. At the time of writing (July 1930), he was grappling with Thomism ("tel du moins que je le comprends" - EA I 35). This Thomist interpretation is apparent in the whole context of his distinction : "En somme, la pensée ne porte que sur les essences. Remarquer que la dépersonnalisation, parfaitement légitime dans ce cas, est au contraire impossible dans l'ordre du penser à. C'est bien un tel qui pense à tel être ou à telle chose. Ceci est très important. Noter d'autre part, que plus nous restaurons le contexte, plus nous glissons du penser dans le penser à. Ceci est important pour comprendre en quel sens l'infini est enveloppé dans le fait de penser l'individu comme essence" (EA I 36-37). For Marcel's understanding on "essence" see Chapter 3, p. 77 and Appendix 1 B, p. 218.
58. According to the process of primary reflection, as Marcel sees it, the object of thought is considered as a problem placed before the thinking subject; it is a problem external to him and capable of solution (cf. PR-GM 65, 47). Marcel argues that if I myself as thinking subject become an object of thought, liable to analysis and categorization, I should be isolated from myself as much as from the other "objects" which constitute my situation. In the play l'Iconoclaste (p. 47), Abel Renaudier declares : "La connaissance exile à l'infini tout ce qu'elle croit êtreindre." On the subject of Marcel's interpretation of the meaning of metaphysics, implied here and shortly in the text, J.B. O'Malley (The Fellowship of Being, 9) gives Marcel's definition of a metaphysician as "a philosopher whose main concern is with being". O'Malley points out, that for the English schools at least, Marcel would not be regarded as a metaphysician.
59. Secondary reflection is a thaw in the freezing by critical reflection of life's vital impulses (ME I 95).
60. PR-GM 65-66 : "un mouvement inverse, un mouvement de reprise qui consiste à prendre conscience de ce qu'il y a de partiel et d'une certaine manière même de suspect dans la démarche purement analytique et à tenter de récupérer au niveau ce concret qu'on a vu précédemment en quelque sorte s'émietter ou se pulvériser." cf. EA I 143, 147, EPC 38-39, PACMO 52, 59, HV 138, PI 120, DB 118, ST 209, JM 71.

61. ST 33. cf. JM 72, PACMO 65, ME I 97-98, PI 193, PR-GM 47.
62. cf. ME I 19, 146, Schg 53, "Some Reflections on Existentialism" in *Philosophy Today*, vol. 8, 4/4, 1964. It is evident, from TR 85, that Marcel identifies Truth (as self-sufficient Truth) with God : "La Vérité qui possède réellement la suffisance à soi-même, ne peut être désignée que d'un seul nom - ce nom, il ne faudrait pas à vrai dire le prononcer aussi facilement et aussi légèrement qu'on a coutume de le faire - le nom même de Dieu."
63. PACMO 65-66. cf. ME I 142, 145-146.
64. cf. PI 193. It must be noted that Marcel's use of the term "syneidesis" differs from that provided by the Oxford English Dictionary. The latter source gives its definition as "that function or department of conscience which is concerned with passing judgment on acts already performed". It quotes from J. Goodman, *Penit. Pard.*, I, (1713), p. 101 : "by (syneidesis) man is able to reflect upon himself, and ... pass judgment on himself." Marcel goes further than this kind of introspective and retrospective reflection in his acceptance of the term : "l'acte par lequel un ensemble est maintenu sous le regard de l'esprit" (HV 27). The "ensemble" which he gives as an example is the union of such notions as "personne-engagement-communauté-réalité" (HV 26). J.B. O'Malley accepts Marcel's interpretation, not only for recollection ("the ultimately philosophic reflection is metaproblematic working with synidesic concepts", op. cit., 74) but also for presence ("the integrative recognition of the presence of others ... a knowledge through convergence of aspects rather than by juxtaposition of properties", op. cit., 58) and for what O'Malley sees as Marcel's central concept of the person "whose meaning is recognized within recollection of himself as a whole through a metaproblematic reflection which recuperates the integrity dissolved by objective thinking" (op.cit., 132). For a consideration of Marcel's notion of presence, see Chapter 3, pp. 81-84.
65. PACMO 64. cf. DH 118, ME I 152.
66. PACMO 63. cf. EA I 141 and 147 : "Le recueillement, dont la possibilité effective peut être regardée comme l'indice ontologique le plus révélateur dont nous disposons, constitue le milieu réel au sein duquel cette récupération [of an intuition which otherwise would be lost] est susceptible de s'accomplir." For mystery, see p. 58.
67. EA I 99 (17 March 1931).
68. In the course of a lecture at the Free University of Berlin in 1950, quoted by Troisfontaines, TM I 201. cf. HCH 76, ME I 139, and ST 174 : "... en définitive ne pourrait-on dire ... que le recueillement par lui-même a une valeur sacralisante?"
69. ME I 184-185. For examples of spiritual mediation in Marcel's plays see Chapter 5, p. 148 (Tante Léna for Simon Bernauer in le Signe de la Croix) and Appendix 2, II, p. 226 (Dom Maurice for Christiane Chesnay in le Monde cassé).
70. PACMO 63, ME I 142.
71. It is interesting to note that in the Bible (Old Testament) God himself will not give his name, e.g. Genesis 32: 29, Exodus 3: 14. The identification of God and Being in its verbal form is, however, compatible with theology. This is the contention of the thesis, as presented in Chapter 1. In Appendix 1 B we shall see how Marcel's affinity with Augustine allows him to reach this conclusion. But Marcel says that he will not force his views on anyone (see p. 16). None the less, he argues towards this ultimate identification of God's presence by dissociating the movement of reflection from any subjectivity or from the Fürsich-sein which he sees as at the centre of German idealism. Rather, he asserts, we are involved in a paradox (which is the essence of mys-

- tery) so that Saint Paul's axiom, "You are not your own", is endowed with its full ontological and essentially concrete significance (cf. PACMO 64).
72. HCH 76.
73. HCH 99, ME I 44, 45. cf. R.A. Knox, The Belief of Catholics, New York, Doubleday, 1958, p. 15 : "A rush age cannot be a reflective age."
74. SdI 290.
75. ME I 139.
76. Marcel stresses his desire to remain on the philosophical side of the fence, e.g. PI 193 : "Mais c'est de façon délibérée que je me suis maintenu ici en-deçà d'une enceinte que le philosophe en tant que tel ne peut que difficilement franchir". Be that as it may, we must examine the objections to the preponderance of the religious element in Marcel; see Part III of this chapter, pp. 59-61.
77. ST 33.
78. EA I 165-166. cf. EA I 124 ("réflexion braquée sur un mystère") and ME I 131 ("La réflexion seconde ... n'est pas autre chose que cette sorte de refaçonnement intérieur; c'est bien ce qui se produit ici lorsque nous voulons atteindre la participation").
79. HCH 68. A problem, Marcel says, is something I meet, something which bars the way and is, therefore, exterior to me (EA I 124, 146, 215; cf. PACMO 54). In a characteristic exercise of linguistic analysis, Marcel observes that "problem" and "object" have corresponding etymological root meanings of something cast before me. "Problem" is derived from the Greek πρόβλημα (from προβαλλειν), "object" from the Latin objectum (from objicio). E.L. Mascall distinguishes further between a puzzle and a problem. A puzzle is "a pseudo-question which vanishes into thin air when the terms in which it is stated are examined" and a problem is "a question which does not evaporate on linguistic analysis and which we cease to ask only when we have discovered the answer" (Words and Images, p. 77).
80. In the main, Marcel seems to accept the traditional Christian concept of the soul; it is for him that innermost part of our being which is at stake in our existence. It is what Marcel calls the "ontological hazard" (EA I 112), which can be saved or lost, as well as denied. He assures us that the great mistake in metaphysics and ethics is the refusal to recognize that the soul can be threatened; this refusal is in fact a denial of the soul (EA I 29). At the same time we must be on our guard, he warns, against describing the soul as an "essence" (EA I 117). His only real definition of the soul is given in its ontological context : "Quelque chose est mis en péril dès le moment où j'existe, mais peut aussi être sauvé et ne sera même qu'à condition d'avoir été sauvé. Cette réalité n'est qu'objet de foi : c'est mon âme" (JM 282). cf. HV 10, 40-41.
81. EA I 146. This is the case of both Moirans and Clarisse in le Palais de sable. Clarisse, considering the exposure of her father's duplicity as his "fall", does not go beyond primary reflection. She does not realize that his "fall" should have been the first step in clearing away the obstacles to truth. Neither Moirans nor Clarisse attains this realization because neither opens the self through disponibilité to welcome the light of truth.
82. EA I 125. He adds that it is a proper character of problems to be reduced to detail, but mystery is something which cannot be reduced to detail (EA I 126).

83. PÄCMO 57. cf. EA I 157-158, 216. Marcel first used the term "mystery" in connection with his studies into the nature of participation. "(La participation) apparaît essentiellement comme mystère, c'est-à-dire comme échappant à toute méthode d'analyse qui la convertirait en objet" (FP 65). From this early note of 1911 we can see, in comparison with his formulation of the notion of "mystery" in 1933, a consistency in his understanding of the term as that which resists the empirical processes of verification. This central term is, therefore, applied to that which resists problematization and is what Marcel called, using idealist terminology, "the non-mediatizable immediate" as opposed to the "common or everyday immediate which gives rise to an infinite number of mediations" (JM 241, DH 113).
84. As Marcel expresses it in terms comprehensible to the followers of Sartre or Heidegger, the zones of the en-moi and the devant-moi are abolished in an inseparable fusion (HCH 69).
85. EA I 124, HCH 69.
86. Marcel notes that mystery is not the same as a secret which is a secret only because I keep it. I can reveal a secret or discover another's; secrets can be betrayed or disclosed. Mystery is not a pseudo-problem temporarily unsolved because of a lack of scientific knowledge which is capable of being produced. Nor is mystery the agnostic's insoluble problem, a lacuna of knowledge nor the idealist's "unknowable" which yet remains within the delimiting sphere of the problematic. The recognition of mystery, on the other hand, is an essentially positive act of the mind (EA I 147). By recollection man enters into himself and recognizes that, as a personal subject, he participates in being as a creative gift from God. If Marcel defines mystery so much in negative terms, it is because mystery, by definition, cannot be defined. As Gallagher points out (op. cit., 35), only an object is definable, and only that which is definable is demonstrable.
87. In the light of Marcel's dialectic the title of this chapter should be rather "The Mystery of God", just as the problem of being is transformed into the Mystery of Being.
88. H.P. Owen, The Christian Knowledge of God, London, Athlone, 1969, p. 328. cf. D.E. Jenkins, Living with Questions, London, SCM, 1969, p. 20. For comments on pantheism, see p. 41 (Chapter 1, fn 129).
89. "La dominante existentielle dans mon oeuvre", loc. cit., 175. The phrase Marcel refers to is to be found in JM (158). cf. ST 263-264 (p. 61, fn 102).
90. The phrase is that of W.E. Carlo, The Ultimate Reducibility of Essence to Existence in Existential Metaphysics, The Hague, Nijhoff, 1966, p. 10.
91. Perhaps one of Marcel's most frequently criticised interpretations is that of the term "presence", a term which has already been referred to during the first two chapters. Its consideration will be left to the next chapter (pp. 81-84 ) where its relevance is greater. Furthermore, I should like to point out that in this section I do not propose to deal with the overall picture of the religious element as it is to be discerned in Marcel's thought. Here I propose to treat of the religious element in the content of Marcel's thought as already covered so far.
92. See pp. 57-58. It may be objected that a situation or question in which I am involved may well be intelligible or even objectively verifiable. Such situations could concern my reason for being in some place and not another, for doing one thing (e.g. following a career) and not another. I can give as my reason that I know where I am and what I am doing simply because I have chosen this particular situation.

- I may even be in a position to claim knowledge of my abilities and potentialities because they have been tested by experience. Marcel would no doubt argue that where I am concerned as a being, existence is involved, and that the lucid awareness of the fact that I exist points to the mystery why I exist. By probing the questioner, he could force him to concede this important point.
93. See above, fn 87.
  94. PACMO 90. Compare, in the light of this discussion, HCH 156-157 : "... c'est, je pense, dans la religion chrétienne que ce mystère [of truth] révèle le mieux sa puissance éclairante", and TR 85 (see above, fn 62).
  95. It is interesting to note that the German translation of le Mystère de l'Etre appeared under the title of "Geheimnis des Seins." Bollnow writes that "Geheimnis" does not have the religious connotation of "Mysterium" but is rather like the French "mystère" in that it, too, could be interpreted as "secret" (Französischer Existentialismus, 157).
  96. L. Sweeney, "Gabriel Marcel's Position on God" in The New Scholasticism, vol. XLIV, No. 1, p. 121.
  97. R. Verneaux, Leçons sur l'existentialisme, 259.
  98. cf. F. Copleston, Contemporary Philosophy, 223-225.
  99. JM 265, 272, 275, 278.
  100. JM 314, 321.
  101. R. Verneaux, op. cit., 259-260.
  102. ST 263-264. cf. JM 158 and Saint Thomas Aquinas, Summa contra Gentiles, I, xxx ad fin. : "We do not know what God is, but only what he is not and how other things are related to him."
  103. ST 266.
  104. ST 268. cf. Schg 41-42.
  105. ST 271.
  106. Marcel disagrees with Ebner who says that thoughts on God have ceased to be of a philosophical nature and remain on the level of the third person. Marcel says that, for himself, "le passage de la troisième personne à la deuxième personne, dans la mesure où il doit être fondé ou justifié philosophiquement, se situe en deçà du religieux proprement dit" (ST 270).
  107. For example, in The Existentialists and God by A.C. Cochrane (Philadelphia, Westminster, 1956), Marcel rates only two passing references; each time he is associated with other "name" philosophers. He is mentioned only once, again in passing, throughout an important collection of essays, Christianity and Existentialism by W. Earle, J.M. Edie and J. Wild (Northwestern U.P., 1963).
  108. E. Gilson, "Un exemple" in Existentialisme chrétien: Gabriel Marcel, 7.
  109. In his Lettre-Préface to Troisfontaines's opus, Marcel writes, speaking of the work: "Il réalise en fin de compte sur une échelle beaucoup plus vaste ce que j'ai voulu donner moi-même dans les Gifford Lectures" (TM I 9). His admiration for Louis Lavelle, for example (cf. JM 282, EPC 37, DH 40, PI 17) is not without some reservations (EPC 9-11).
  110. cf. ME I 8, ST 98, EPC 26-27, 95-96.
  111. ST 307. Marcel is like Socrates, not only in his method. Socrates, although hailed by Plato as the wisest of men, yet declared that if he had any wisdom it consisted in knowing that he knew nothing.
  112. TM I 25.

## CHAPTER THREE

GOD IS

Ἐἶπεν ὁ Θεὸς πρὸς Μωϋσῆν λέγων,  
 Ἐγὼ εἰμι ὁ ὢν. καὶ εἶπεν,  
 Οὕτως ἔρεῖς τοῖς υἱοῖς Ἰσραὴλ,  
 ὁ ὢν ἀπεσταλκός με πρὸς ὑμᾶς.

- EXODUS, 3 : 14.

It is indeed absurd to propose new grounds for belief in the existence of God. The belief has stood for more than 2000 years, if we are to speak of the essentials of transcendental theism.

- A.M. FARRER, Finite and Infinite, 3.  
 (London, Dacre, 1959)

La démarche philosophique essentielle sera toujours, je pense, plus heuristique que démonstrative à proprement parler.

- G. MARCEL, Le Mystère de l'Etre I, 8.

# I. Marcel and the classical "proofs" of God's existence.

## i. Marcel's attitude

Gabriel Marcel is not satisfied with the traditional means employed by the apologists of affirming Transcendent Being. By these means it is claimed that the existence of God is established by reasoned proof. Whether the proof be a priori or a posteriori, he points out, there remains a fundamental and initial presupposition, a prior affirmation of belief.<sup>1</sup> Besides, such proofs - especially of the latter type - have always appeared (to him at least) unconvincing. They are, as Duns Scotus said of Anselm's ontological argument, persuasiones probabiles. Marcel suggests that historians should enclose the word proof in inverted commas, even when they expound them in minute detail.<sup>2</sup> All manner of proofs, e.g. cosmological and ontological, refer to a certain datum which is belief, and as such they forfeit their validity.<sup>3</sup> The paradox, if not the scandal, of the proofs is that they are efficacious only when they are really not needed, and serve to confirm what has been given in another way.<sup>4</sup> The traditional proofs are of no use as a means of convincing a person who has not received the prior knowledge which is the basis of belief. While they may be logically irrefutable, they lack persuasive power since the conclusion is already formulated in the initial premiss. The act of proving, Marcel says,

c'est faire reconnaître à un autre que du moment où il admet une certaine proposition, il est tenu d'admettre aussi telle autre proposition qui n'est pas distincte de celle-là qu'en apparence, et que, livré à lui-même, il mettait en doute. (5)

For any effort of proving to be properly efficacious, Marcel urges that we should have to be first agreed on a common ground for communication.<sup>6</sup> Otherwise, he asserts, we should be pretentious, claiming to possess information denied to the other. This unwarranted attitude may lead us to interpret the other's non-belief as "bad faith" or intransigence in opposition to our own will. The unbeliever can refuse to follow the reasoning of the apologist. The refusal may be caused by the fear that his freedom as a self-determining human being will be limited if he is obliged to confess dependence on some other-worldly power. To achieve proper communication the believer should be prepared to humble himself, admitting both that in the depths of his own being there still lies some measure of unbelief and that, in the light of truth which, Marcel declares, is also that of charity, he may see that the other who professes to be an unbeliever may attest more authentically what his interlocutor affirms.<sup>7</sup>

Evidently Marcel himself tries to find common ground with "non-believers". But, in his ecumenical zeal, he seems to make a dubious claim. This arises from his statement that, just as there are people who, professing to be



believers, venerate in fact an idol which would be repudiated by any decent theology, so there are professed unbelievers who none the less, by their actions and conduct, reveal an inarticulate belief in God.<sup>8</sup> We can only say that Marcel meant to say that there may be some who consider themselves to be unbelievers who yet are by no means convinced atheists. He returns to safer ground when he states that the question "Do you believe in God?" is not really answerable by a simple yes or no. Any answer to such a referendum would have to be, "I don't know and I'm not quite sure what believing in God is."<sup>9</sup>

There is, or there ought to be, some consolidating factor in our experience to act as confirming evidence that our faith, the activity of believing, has value. This is the standpoint of some contemporary thinkers who claim to be empiricists in that they hold that all true knowledge emanates from and can be referred to experience. But more often than not, these empereia are of the physical world and as such can be legitimately analysed according to established criteria in scientific investigations. Marcel is adamant that God cannot be judged according to objective norms. We cannot put ourselves in God's place, just as we cannot really put ourselves in anyone else's place.<sup>10</sup>

This principle of the ineligibility or disqualification of judgment is fundamental to Marcel's dialectic of being-in-communion : it applies primarily to the self, then to others and by logical extension to God. God is unverifiable scientifically. In terms of sense experience, from the observation of the physical universe, we must admit that there can be really no experienceable evidence of God. Marcel recognizes as one of the "sentimental" forms of atheism<sup>11</sup> that, if God cannot be justified according to the data of rational proofs, he is no more than a superfluous hypothesis and his existence is not vindicated by empirical investigation.

On voit donc qu'il y a deux façons radicalement distinctes de dénier l'existence à Dieu ... l'une revenant à traiter Dieu comme un objet empirique et à dire: "Cet objet ne se rencontre pas dans l'expérience"; l'autre se traduisant par l'affirmation que Dieu ne peut pas être traité comme un objet empirique et que par conséquent l'existence ne peut lui convenir. (12)

Marcel's adoption of this second way of saying that God does not exist has caused great perturbation among some commentators who refer to Marcel's earlier investigations as tainted with an atheistic tendency.<sup>13</sup> This is not so. Marcel is simply stating that the question of God is beyond the reach of empirical processes. It is because he says that God does not "exist" according to the empiricists' findings that he can affirm, without contradiction, God's transcendence.<sup>14</sup> Marcel is consistent in following the direction of his enquiries in a follow-through of his distinctions between existence and objectivity, problem and mystery. Years later (1961),

when defending himself against the charge of ever entertaining atheistic notions, he says of his earlier investigations :

Mon souci était au contraire de trouver une possibilité de sauvegarder la réalité de Dieu qui m'apparaissait comme inévitablement compromise lorsqu'on parlait de son existence, l'existence ne pouvant être affirmée, pensais-je, qu'à propos de ce qui se situe dans les limites de l'expérience. Il y avait d'ailleurs là aussi un ressouvenir kantien. Mais la gageure que je m'efforçais de tenir c'était dans cette atmosphère infiniment raréfiée de sauvegarder ce qui, dès cette époque, m'apparaissait comme le plus important, je veux dire l'amour entendu au sens plus profond et, ajouterai-je, le moins psychologique. (15)

His concern with the God of Love, whose worship is more a loving relationship in adoration than an adoration based on the idea of obedience to a supernatural feudal lord, led him to oppose a Thomism which seemed to give preponderant importance to the divine attributes in such a way as to emphasize the magisterial, almost the tyrannical, qualities of God, the Supreme Lord and Master, the Judge, the King. Marcel would like to hear more of the loving God, the Source and Guarantor of our being and our fidelity, and even of the "weakness" of God.<sup>16</sup> Above all, Marcel shows himself anti-pathetic towards the Thomist concept of causality.

## ii. Marcel's position

Marcel's opposition to the Thomist concept of causality is engendered by his insistence on man's integral freedom. As far as he is concerned, this conceptualization of God as efficient and final mover deprives man of his own creative freedom by which he can choose or reject his own destiny.<sup>17</sup> In this attitude Marcel moves somewhat close to Jaspers and Heidegger who feel that divine causality would reduce man to an objectified subject in the world of a "passive" creation. Marcel's emphasis on the creative freedom of the creature, on Being as the spirit of creation transmitted in creativity urges him to oppose any unqualified principle of causality. (Nietzsche and Sartre reject God outright because his divine causality denies man's complete, subjective freedom.) Marcel's case against causality is as follows. Causality implies the objectification of man - and also of God. Man becomes an objective instrument to be manipulated by a God who in turn may well turn out to be a computerized deity. Furthermore, if God is the efficient cause who determines nature, we can logically postulate predestination as man's condition. But God is the Creator. His activity of creation, in which we share as we participate in being, should not be viewed in terms of cause and effect but in those of a loving giver, an Absolute Thou who addresses an appeal to us to seek our fulfilment.

It would appear, however, that if Marcel is to hold that participation is creative, that Being is Creativity, he must allow some measure of causality. If beings receive their being, is not this an indication of the causative influence of Being? After all, Marcel stresses man's status as created being; surely Creation implies causality? Marcel does not provide any satisfactory answer to support his objection to causality as such. Somehow there must be a dimension of causality in which both God's creative influence and man's personal freedom are compatible. Marcel asserts that there is such a dimension (while not recognizing explicitly that there can be causality) which is not of the order of objectivity, to which order the rationalized proofs belong as much as does atheism. This dimension, he claims, is situated in the realm of intersubjectivity.<sup>18</sup> But even in a consideration of this intersubjective activity there must be something which causes the action; it is not simply gratuitous. If it were, Marcel's whole dialectic of freedom and creativity would be disqualified by itself. Therefore, he postulates grace; but does not grace (a term with theological connotations) imply a Giver? And so we return full circle to the notion of causality. Marcel's opposition seems to be only terminological.

Even Saint Thomas Aquinas can be interpreted from an existential standpoint, as has been pointed out by some writers.<sup>19</sup> His statement that God's existence and essence are identical shows that God, by existing as a self-sufficient being, is the source of every truth.<sup>20</sup> Commenting on the name "He Who Is" as the most proper name of God, Aquinas quotes John Damascene who noted that this name is the principal of all names applied to God "for, comprehending all in itself, it contains being itself as an infinite and indeterminate sea of substance."<sup>21</sup> The basic point is the interpretation of essentia as a translation of οὐσία.<sup>22</sup> Marcel certainly opposes the term "substance", but he does agree that the best possible name to apply to God is "He Who Is". It is, after all, the name God himself used.

Le ego sum qui sum de l'Ecriture serait vraiment, ontologiquement parlant, la formule la plus adéquate [for thinking of God]. (23)

Marcel's position is, then, that we cannot postulate existence for God insofar as it would be an abstract assertion (that he is) without saying what he is, which is "essence". Aquinas holds that in God essence and existence are synonymous; Marcel is more concerned not with the question that God exists but that he is. To state that God exists, John E. Smith points out, would be to treat God as a finite component of a system rather than as "the ground and goal of all systems", and, whereas for finite beings existence and essence can be "disrupted", it would be unintelligible to separate existence from God in order to make of it the object of demonstration.<sup>24</sup> Gabriel Marcel has long held a similar position from the time he

noted with approval that Maimonides was correct in saying that "existence" cannot apply to God.<sup>25</sup> Throughout his philosophical career he has resisted any attempts to objectify God. "Dieu n'existe pas", he said flatly in the winter of 1910-1911 and, to avoid appearing atheistic, he explained, "il est infiniment par delà l'existence."<sup>26</sup>

The same anthropomorphic idea of God lies at the root of the atheistic denial of God and the Death-of-God movement. When we speak of God, Marcel repeats in order to bring home this truth, we should realize that it is not of God that we are speaking. Existence can only be defined in relation to something other than existence : it cannot be a predicate. Thus it is that Marcel concentrates his metaphysical enquiry on being rather than on existence. And while, in the view of some contemporary thinkers, it would be better to speak of the "reality" of God, Marcel would seem to prefer Plato's term for ultimate reality, τὸ ὄντως ὄν, which retains the significance of reality founded in being.<sup>27</sup> More favourable yet, perhaps, would be Macquarrie's interpretation of the quintessence of being as "the dynamic letting-be of beings". Reality is thus "is-ness" rather than "thing-ness" and God as Being lets-be rather than is.<sup>28</sup>

## II. Marcel's dialectic aligned.

### i. Participation and reflection

In an early attempt to approach the question of God, Gabriel Marcel applied himself to the Hegelian notion of Absolute Knowledge conceived as reality. He came to the conclusion that neither Absolute Knowledge nor Absolute Experience could be regarded as a self-sufficient whole.<sup>29</sup> In his view, the idealists' mistake seems to consist in hypostasizing what is only a requirement of thought, and in believing that it is possible to isolate and consider the product of this act as reality itself.<sup>30</sup> In the course of his study he discovered the first clue to the apprehension of what was to be formulated as the Mystery of Being. This clue is the rôle of participation, first considered as the total participation of the thinking subject. This theory was to be the lever for securing a release from the abstraction-alization of idealism.

(Les philosophies du Savoir absolu) croient pouvoir couper le lien qui unit l'objet (ici le savoir absolu) au sujet et traiter l'objet comme un être, sans s'apercevoir que la réalité de cet être est due à sa participation au savoir. Le savoir absolu, comme la matière ou la vie, n'est encore qu'une abstraction, la plus haute et la plus concrète, il est vrai. (31)

Later, as he began to consider the distinction between existence and

objectivity, he came to realize the need to restore the primacy of being. By the time of his Position et approches concrètes du mystère ontologique he had, at least, "concretized" his own position. The phrase, "ontological need", is another, more positive way of expressing man's primordial assurance of being - the intuition aveuglée - which is the basic principle of any "true" philosophy of being, by which Marcel calls metaphysics.<sup>32</sup> He emphasizes the need to restore ontological weight to experience and also draws our attention to the central rôle played by true metaphysical reflection. His whole dialectic of participation and intersubjective is, in fine, directed towards the most basic question of our being - God.

It is through the ontological need that we are led to seek our own identity and to find it as participation in a Transcendent Being who is God. The ontological need is itself a mode of participation.<sup>33</sup> And it is through secondary reflection that a person may recover the metaproblematic reality that eludes the mind, notwithstanding the objective "proofs" for God's existence. These, he claims, remain on the level of primary reflection where they wear themselves out, as it were, in rationalization and leave the question of God's existence as purely problematic. Accordingly, Marcel asserts that the theist must resort to secondary reflection, a "hyperphenomenological"<sup>34</sup> elucidation of those data which are not only "metempirical" but spiritual. This "spirituality" is intersubjectivity. Marcel holds that whatever experiential traces of God there are will be found in interpersonal relationships, of being to being, exchanging a mutual "thou-dialogue". In this way one can reach the reality of the Absolute Thou who guarantees and underpins these human relationships.

Primary reflection, therefore, tends to dissolve the unity of experience while secondary reflection is essentially recuperative. In the matter of God secondary reflection recovers man's awareness of the Mystery of Being and

sans être encore elle-même la foi, parvient du moins  
à préparer, à ménager ce que j'appellerais volontiers  
son emplacement spirituel. (35)

The "problem of being", Marcel notes, will only be the translation into inadequate language of a mystery which cannot be given except to a creature whose central characteristic is that he is not simply identical with his own life.<sup>36</sup>

## ii. Hyperphenomenology

By his method which he describes as more hyperphenomenological<sup>37</sup> - since the ontological need transcends the objective situation treated by phenomenology - Marcel manages to combine the intuitive and inferential possibilities of attaining to knowledge of God. As many writers have shown, mere

direct inferential knowledge of God is not possible; likewise neither is purely intuitive knowledge. At this point it is necessary to recall that the ontological need is basically a "need-for-being".<sup>38</sup> There must be being, Marcel argues, because we ourselves are. We are impelled to proclaim being simply because being is; this is the force of the ontological need. A higher form of phenomenological study is required if we are to appreciate the vastness and inexhaustibility of being because, since we ourselves are completely "immersed" or involved in being, we cannot really pretend to subject it to phenomenological analysis. Marcel is in no way advocating ontologism, as he has been charged with by at least one commentator.<sup>39</sup> Ontologism is the view that we can know God directly in this life, otherwise than inferentially. According to the ontologist propositions, condemned by Pope Pius IX in the decree of the Holy Office, 18 December 1861, God is the primary object of the intellect, such that we know him more immediately and more certainly than we know anything else. This doctrine would lead to a proportioning of God to the human mind and an identification of God with the world.

To avoid this error, Saint Bonaventure preferred the term "contuition" when he said that the soul knows God as being most present to it. For the soul, recognizing its dependence, sees that it is the image of God. As it necessarily knows itself, it is aware of itself (it is self-conscious) and knows God in at least an imperfect manner. This implicit awareness is made explicit through contemplation. Marcel's thought is similar. Whereas Aquinas speaks of the causal and analogical inference of God from those things of which we have direct knowledge, Marcel, while recognizing the value of experiential knowledge, overcomes (to his satisfaction) what he sees as the problem of analogia entis by postulating secondary reflection. The "intuition aveuglée" of being is not innate, it is at most latent. Its presence, he says, is expressed by the ontological uneasiness which impels reflection. The intuition is not in me. He explains :

Au fond ce qui conduit à admettre cette intuition, c'est le fait de réfléchir sur ce paradoxe que je ne sais pas moi-même ce que je crois ... On admet spontanément le contraire - c'est-à-dire que je peux faire une sorte d'inventaire de mes objets de croyance ou encore une "ventilation" entre ce que je crois et ce que je ne crois pas, ce qui implique qu'une différence m'est donnée, m'est sensible entre ce à quoi j'adhère et ce à quoi je n'adhère pas. (40)

Prini describes Marcel's unformulated "proof" as exigential inference at the centre of the mystery of God which contains and penetrates us, being more intimate to us than our own selves<sup>41</sup> since, in reality, it is the primordial source of all our own being. Marcel would, therefore, seem to be presenting an existential ontological argument. He tries, however, to

avoid its disqualification by basing it not on concepts but on an "analogy of presentiality".<sup>42</sup> Thus we can appreciate the important rôle of the notion of presence in Marcel's dialectic, particularly as it is involved in his approach to God.

### iii. Presence

#### (a) Marcel's interpretation.

It is presence which underpins the loving communion between person and person, being and being, on the human level of intersubjective relationships, and between being and Being, on the transcended level. Through the notion of presence we are invited, rather than led, to regard God as a Thou and not as a Him. Presence guarantees the validity of intersubjectivity, of hope in the perennity of intersubjective fidelity, and of hope in a personal God who is the Absolute Thou.

In existential phenomenology ~ as Marcel understands it ~ our knowledge of reality depends on an experience of presence which, in turn, is interpreted as the fusion of the directing intention and a given object.<sup>43</sup> In terms of Marcel's hyperphenomenology, the relation between person and person can be transcended (hence hyper-phenomenology) when I accept the other not as an object among other objects (animate as well as inanimate) but as intimately related to me, since, like me, the other has his being from God. For Gabriel Marcel, essences are not synonymous with objects, insofar as they are beings. Rather they are "présences éclairantes"<sup>44</sup> which illuminate for me, through the correspondingly illuminated intuition of being, my relationship with the Absolute Presence who is the source of all Being, as also of all Light.

Quand je dis qu'un être m'est donné comme présence ou comme être (cela revient au même, car il n'est pas un être pour moi s'il n'est une présence), cela signifie que je ne peux pas le traiter comme s'il était simplement posé devant moi; entre lui et moi se noue une relation qui en un certain sens déborde la conscience que je suis susceptible d'en prendre; il n'est plus seulement devant moi, il est aussi en moi; ou plus exactement ces catégories sont surmontées, elles n'ont plus de sens. (45)

The presence of the other to me, in encounter, is achieved by a mutual recognition by way of a response to an appeal (invocation) ~ which need not be articulate<sup>46</sup> ~ whereby a "dyadic" relationship is established so that each becomes a "thou" for the other.<sup>47</sup> This is why Marcel is dissatisfied with Cartesian dualism; Marcel's metaphysics is that of the we are as opposed to a metaphysics of I think.<sup>48</sup> Love, sustained by fidelity, is the motivating force of the reciprocity through presence : the other co-exists with me in a co-presence.<sup>49</sup>

(b) An examination of this notion.

It can be easily stated -- and with apparent good reason -- that Marcel's notion of presence is loaded with psychological overtones. It has been objected that "presence" can be an ambiguous term and an unsatisfactory notional approach to God. Marcel points out that "presence" is not necessarily operational just because one is in physical proximity with another. Of course, a person can exist without making his presence felt; he cannot make his presence felt without existing -- and presumably being present. But, one can have the feeling that somebody is present when in reality nobody else is there. Marcel recognizes this possibility : it features in some of his plays.<sup>50</sup> However, Marcel's idea of "presence" of one who is actually absent is meant to apply only to someone who is known and loved by the person who "feels" the presence. At no time does Marcel envisage his notion of "presence" as including the possibility of a psychic ("spiritualist") presence of a person from the past who was not known personally by the recipient of the mediated "encounter". As Marcel uses the term in its philosophical context, "presence" is primarily not physical. It is the reciprocal response of two individual personalities to a mutual appeal and is conditioned by a willingness to open oneself to the other in self-less love.

In the light of the clarification given, Marcel's definition of presence as "mystery" in the exact measure in which it is presence<sup>51</sup> is made intelligible. This notion is, therefore, an integral element of his ontology. It is also at the centre of his attempt to reach an experiential knowledge of the mystery of God. Presence gives the seal of guarantee to intersubjective love and fidelity. Presence, however, is only partially satisfied by those human experiences when the intersubjective inspiration remains in the human dimension. By recognizing the enduring presence of others, we acknowledge not only them but Being which is ever present, surrounding and enfolding us, appealing to us through the "ontological need". The ontological need is only partially satisfied in finite centres of response. It will be wholly satisfied in pleromatic union with a Thou of a higher order (than a "thou"); that is to say the ontological need will be satisfied fully only in an infinite centre of response. Since presence is to be found in all creation, visible or not<sup>52</sup>, it must emanate from the Creator. Presence is thus established in an Absolute Presence.

As mystery, presence is closely connected with the other dimensions of the mysterious. Of these faith is the most important for the purposes of this thesis. Faith and presence must be interrelated, if Marcel's "presential analogy" is to be valid as a way of affirming the reality of God. For, in his investigations into the transcendence of the Absolute Thou, he recognized the need to distinguish between existence and objectivity so that,



while in no way attributing objectivity to the Absolute Thou, its existence should be safeguarded.<sup>53</sup> It is, therefore, through the notion of intersubjective presence that Marcel shows the way to a hyperphenomenological approach to the mystery of God's "existence".<sup>54</sup> In short, God's presence is his existence : God is because he is present.

God, then, is Absolute Presence, the transcendent présence éclairante. But God is not merely a "presence".<sup>55</sup> God is Being, not a being; he is Presence, not a presence. Conceived as "a presence", he would be little more than ethereal and of no real value for Christian (i.e. religious) experience. Experience, as Marcel understands it, is not closed: presence indicates openness (disponibilité) to the other as thou. Absolute presence is the ultimate ground of presence. It is through the dialogical character of our involvement in situation with others that we can appreciate the true nature of our relationships with God as Absolute Thou. Just as Augustine says "God is Is"<sup>56</sup>, Marcel's presential analogy leads to the conclusion (and not an optional inference) that God is : he is present to and in us.<sup>57</sup>

The connection between Marcel's "exigential inference" (and at the same time the transcendence of the "ontological need") and his "presential analogy" can be seen in his comments on an affirmation of God more acceptable than that provided by the Thomist proofs :

Ce qui me semble essentiel dans l'affirmation de Dieu, c'est qu'elle est liée à l'affirmation de l'insuffisance du monde. Alors en ce sens ce serait ma réponse au sujet des preuves : pour moi, la notion de preuves de l'existence de Dieu est une notion que je n'accepterai jamais. Cette idée d'une sorte de démonstration est quelque chose qui m'est aussi étranger que possible. Dans Du refus à l'invocation, je dis que ces preuves ne sont des preuves que pour des gens qui ont déjà des preuves intuitives de l'existence de Dieu. Si ces démonstrations étaient recevables, elles seraient universellement recevables pour tous. Kant est tout de même passé par là. Il y a sur ce point dans le thomisme une certaine naïveté.

En revanche, je pense qu'il peut exister des itinéraires qui me paraissent passer par cette conscience que le monde ne se suffit pas à lui-même. C'est dire que le monde, quelle que soit sa complexité, ne peut pas arriver à satisfaire : c'est pour cela qu'il y a une exigence de Dieu. On est toujours obligé de le présupposer ou de l'éveiller (il y a une maïeutique de cette exigence) mais cela n'équivaut pas à une preuve. Ce qui compte c'est la présence de Dieu, or une présence est, sur le plan existentiel, quelque chose qu'on ne démontre pas. (58)

(c) "Presence" and "revelation".

Gabriel Marcel does not need, therefore, to elaborate proofs of God after the manner of the Thomists nor even after the manner of Anselm. It

would appear, however, that Marcel's presential analogy is very close to revelation : his notion of the immediacy of presence seems to presuppose revelation. In an effort to avoid transgressing beyond "pure" philosophy, he claims that there is a distinction between theological and "ontological" revelation. At no time, really, does he have recourse to the Revealed Word of God as it is couched in the Scriptures.

Revelation in the theological sense, Marcel declares, is the opposite of enquiry; an enquiring consciousness desiring to be self-contained would, in his view, be opposed to theological revelation.<sup>59</sup> On the other hand, he says, revelation of the ontological order is unspoken. According to his acceptance, this "ontological" revelation is the impulse of the "intuition aveuglée" which is at the heart of the ontological need.<sup>60</sup> Marcel seems to be presenting an elitist doctrine, however, when he declares that revelation, in this sense, can be meaningful only to a person who is involved in and committed to participating in a non-problematic reality which founds the being (person) as subject.<sup>61</sup> He claims that this revelation - the recognition of the ontological mystery - can be grasped by those who are strangers to religion in the accepted sense. Those who are already "religious" will be enlightened to plumb the depths of the mystery of being in a way not possible to those who will not venture beyond the sphere of the problematic.<sup>62</sup> Be that as it may, Marcel's whole notion of presence and the ontological revelation which gives it meaning does appear to be valid only for those "special" beings who are given a "special" grace, which here seems to be in effect sufficient insight to agree with Marcel's whole presentation of being as "mystery".

A question which Marcel leaves unanswered is the source of this "ontological revelation". If he were to reply that it comes from being itself, since its manifestation is the ontological need and its content is awareness of the ontological mystery, he should have to be more specific than to attribute its source to an abstraction. And if he shies clear by naming some "puissance spirituelle", we can only conclude that the source is Being, the Creative Activity of God. "Ontological" and "theological" revelation, then, stem from the same source. The phrase "ontological revelation" seems to amount to much the same thing as a translation into philosophical language of divine revelation. From this consideration we can see that Marcel is disguising the influence of grace as "une sorte d'irradiation fécondante."<sup>63</sup> And the case of those who object to the thinly-concealed religious element in Marcel's philosophy is further strengthened - and confirmed by what is yet to come.

iv. "Disponibilité"

Fundamental to the efficacy of presence is the readiness on the part of each to open himself ("to open credit"), to bestow himself selflessly, in the interests of the other. This disposition Marcel calls disponibilité. It is a term which has been used already in this thesis, and whose meaning should be reasonably clear. The French term is, as Marcel admits, difficult to translate : it has been variously rendered as "handiness", "availability" (the commonest), "disposability" and in the Anglicized form "disponibility". While I prefer to keep the original, I have at times used "availability" rather than a composite term, after the style of Heidegger, "willingness-to-respond". Whatever the translation, Marcel stresses the importance of this disposition :

Il est en réalité essentiel à la vie, non seulement ...  
de se référer à autre chose qu'elle, mais de s'articuler  
intérieurement à une réalité qui lui donne son sens et  
comme sa justification. (64)

It is upon our ready openness, our disponibilité, that depends our response: it is of our essential freedom as human beings to choose to accept or refuse the challenges and responsibilities of intersubjective presence.<sup>65</sup>

The opposition between the two extremes, disponibilité and indisponibilité, has its roots in the opposition between "being" and "having". "Unavailability" arises from the unwillingness to give of oneself, fearing to lose some measure of status, the unwillingness to surrender one's possessions. The person who is obsessed by his possessions is self-absorbed, and tends to identify himself with what he has and not with what he is.<sup>66</sup> This egocentric attitude is broken down when the person is open and disponible; selfless acts of love help to dismantle the "hedge-hog defences"<sup>67</sup> of indisponibilité. We can appreciate that "availability" is the hall-mark of the Christian - or it should be. It can be easily identified as the inspiration of Christian ethics. There is a close connection between disponibilité and présence. Presence is essentially intersubjectivity, it is the gift of self, it belongs to the being capable of giving himself. To be incapable of presence is to be encumbered with the self.<sup>68</sup>

It is through my readiness to put myself at the disposal of another who is mutually present to me that I am enabled to recognize the "veiled" presence (présence voilée) of being.<sup>69</sup> The "veil" is apparently removed once I accept the other and welcome him in a mutual exchange of respect and love. In response to the appeal addressed to me as a fellow-existent, I come to see the other in a new light, for his presence is a "présence éclairante". Thus, in response to God's appeal to me for "conversion", I can come to "see" him also in a new light, the light of grace. My willingness to extend unlimited credit in the other's favour relaxes the restrictive tension

(crispation) of my attachment to self (the "moi") so that I am free to give of my "indispensable" time and attention.<sup>70</sup> I welcome him to the fulness of my response so that, in the awareness that he has been recognized as a fellow-being<sup>71</sup>, he too can share in the experience of grace.

#### v. Grace

For, in effect (and certainly on the religious plane) my availability is my ready disposition to the influence of grace. Grace, for Marcel, is not an empirical datum; it is an appeal from a supra-empirical reality. The effectiveness of grace depends on my freely chosen response to participate in an intersubjective communion which is grounded in an unobjectifiable presence. In this context, grace is the offering to 'me of the Absolute Presence by "himself" as Absolute Thou whose call I am invited to reciprocate. And my response should be activated by a keen sense of joy and gratitude inasmuch as grace is, by definition, a gift. Being, life and existence are gifts and in this sense can be regarded as graces. My individual, personal being is a precious gift bestowed upon me for my safe-keeping by my Father who is the epitome of that prototype of gift-givers, the loving father. It is through procreation, Marcel suggests, that we share in the creation of God. Indeed, he says, it is precisely as fatherhood in its purity that the relation between the living God and the faithful should be conceived.<sup>72</sup>

The salvific rôle of freedom is the possibility presented to us to open ourselves to grace just as, in human love, we are free to surrender ourselves to the other's charm. While charm cannot be equated absolutely with presence, charm does seem to be one of the ways in which a presence makes itself felt. Charm is non-objective, Marcel explains, it is intersubjective.<sup>73</sup> Once again we note the connection between freedom and grace.<sup>74</sup> Marcel asserts that the idea of grace is fundamental in the "true" apprehension of freedom. It is only on the basis of grace-freedom, he claims, that we can rise to the affirmation of the presence of God.

L'idée de la grâce doit être jugée fondamentale, et je serai même porté à dire que c'est seulement à partir d'elle que nous pouvons, si gauchement que ce soit, nous élever vers l'affirmation je ne dirai pas de l'existence, mais de la présence de Dieu. (75)

When we reflect on the question "What am I?", grace shows us that this question is an appeal to the Transcendent Absolute Thou who alone knows me wholly and who cannot deceive me, being Truth.<sup>76</sup>

Weaknesses in Marcel's grace-freedom-disponibilité notion have already been indicated<sup>77</sup>, but here I must point out that Marcel's case, as presented in this context of his presential analogy, leads so far and no further. For

grace's mission is to show that God as Absolute Thou and Truthful Presence is addressing to me an appeal to ask the question about my ontological status. Marcel leaves the answer unsaid, as well as any elaboration beyond the "threshold" of conversion. His reluctance to proceed further is dictated by his own avowed position : he remains the "philosopher of the threshold". Any elaboration, we must conclude, would be considered by Marcel as an exercise in mystical speculation. As far as he is concerned, his contribution is to demonstrate, by his dialectic of participation in an ontological, intersubjective communion, bolstered by his presential analogy, the reasonableness of faith in God who is to be considered as Absolute Thou.

#### vi. Invocation

I cannot think of God without thinking of my relation to him as a mutual exchange of appeal. But we should not know to whom to appeal unless an original appeal had already been addressed to us, urging us to enquire about our (ontological) condition. This is a return to the circularity of the notions of grace, freedom and disponibilité. There is also something of the idea of prevenience in this argument and it can be seen operating in the ontological need.<sup>78</sup> In my invocation as prayer, by refusing to think of God as him, I maintain a truly dyadic relationship and recognize the completeness of my dependence on God.<sup>79</sup> The Absolute Thou is thus my absolute Recourse<sup>80</sup>, since what is at stake is my very being. It would appear, then, that what Marcel really means by the "ontological need" is that we should proceed from a recognition of the need for being to the recognition of Being.<sup>81</sup> The ontological need on the plane of philosophy is transcended on the plane of a higher philosophy (Marcel's "metaphysics"?), in an identification of the need for the Absolute Recourse.

The recognition and acknowledgment of the Absolute Thou elicits, Marcel hopes, a response made in all humility<sup>82</sup> by the subject if it is to be regarded as a confession of faith in God. There must always be the possibility of refusal.<sup>83</sup> It is only by free invocation that I open myself to the Absolute Thou. Marcel defends his use of the mystical language of the appeal by positing a line of demarcation between mysticism and metaphysics. The terms of the appeal do not describe an experience, he explains; rather they translate a fundamental situation which the philosopher ought to recognize regardless of his personal beliefs.<sup>84</sup> Be that as it may, there are probably many thinkers who would not accede to Marcel's request. The very prayer-like form of the appeal must be construed as addressed to God, if it is not to be taken as the manifesto of an agnostic :

Que suis-je? Toi seul en vérité me connais et me juges; douter de Toi, ce n'est pas me libérer, c'est m'anéantir. Mais ce serait douter de Toi, bien plus, ce serait Te nier que de regarder Ta réalité comme sujette à problème; puisque ces problèmes ne sont que par moi et pour moi qui les pose, et qu'ici c'est moi-même qui suis mis en question dans l'acte sans retour par lequel je m'efface et me sou mets. (85)

Faith, hope and love coincide in this invocation by which we aspire to the fulness of the fellowship of Being. It is because of our faith and trust in God as Absolute Thou that we love all other beings in their presences, who have their value only in the Absolute Presence. Christian religion and ethics can be summed in the prayer, "I hope in Thee for us".<sup>86</sup>

The question of experienceable relations with God is, however, not easily answered. Just as we do not require identification from our guests because we respect them as persons and do all in our power to assure them of an unconditional welcome, so in prayer we do not ask God to provide his "papers". Just as we do not question the existence of our intimate friends, so we should not require objective, demonstrable proofs of God's identity, let alone of his existence. Our friends are there, and we get to know who they are better by intercommunication. In the same way, it could be argued, God is and we get to know him better through appeal and response,

But here we encounter an objection, and one to which Marcel does not provide a cut-and-dried solution. The objection is that, whereas our knowledge of others is gained through our senses, God is not "there" in any sensible (i.e. physical) manner. It is all very well to say that if we speak of God as a "someone", we treat him as an absent third party<sup>87</sup> and refuse to him who is the Source of our being what we freely and unconditionally accord to others. For then we are led to infer that God is, and this affirmation depends on a presupposition of faith. This faith in God, as Marcel notes, involves the affirmation that it is itself conditioned by God, which is to say : "l'esprit pose Dieu comme le posant".<sup>88</sup> Any relationship between myself and God can only be established with any validity if first I recognize God as God. The fundamental question, therefore, is one of faith and this shall be investigated in the following chapter.

Marcel admits this necessary precondition of faith when he stresses that our relations with God are only analogous to those that unite us with those fellow beings whom we love.

Il semble que s'ébauchent entre Dieu et le croyant des relations singulièrement analogues à celles qui dans l'ordre de l'amour unissent entre elles des créatures. (89)

Then, and only then, can we appreciate the scriptural affirmation, "The Kingdom of God is within you", or, as Marcel says, one's centre must be not in oneself but in God; outside of this there is no religion.<sup>90</sup> We cannot

speak of God without invoking him in us, and for us. Our union is such that, as he is my Absolute Thou, I am thee for him. As Arnaud Chartrain explains to his stepmother, Eveline, that he has made a pact with God :

Je n'éprouve pas le besoin de donner un nom à mon ...  
partenaire; je sais seulement que c'est une présence  
... pas une présence humaine ... quelqu'un dont je ne  
peux pas parler, mais pour qui je suis toi. (91)

### III. God and Being.

#### i. Enlightenment on the mystery of God

Marcel's approach to the mystery of God is, as we have seen, by "exigential inference". He appears to be wary of the two main avenues, recognized by traditional theologians, which lead to possible knowledge of God : revelation and reason. But the latter, by itself, is inadequate unless enlightened by the former.<sup>92</sup> Marcel insists, however, that any kind of reasoning that tends to objectification must be avoided so that the holiness of God can be safeguarded. Theology and philosophy (in the accepted traditional sense) are both at a disadvantage, therefore, in the question of elucidating the mystery of God. Theology, of course, has revelation to fall back on. But theology's weakness in its own field, until at least recent times, is seen by Marcel to lie in its use of philosophical conceptual equipment which is not attuned to the demands of religious consciousness. Moreover, he adds, its equipment borrowed from philosophy is outmoded.<sup>93</sup> Marcel would seem to urge his own meditative metaphysics as a better vehicle - and risk its disqualification as mystical and inconsequential.

According to this dialectic, God is always available; he remains open to us as long as we are aware of our relationship with him. This can be experienced through reciprocal rapprochements, founded on the dyadic interaction : in encounter and appeal on his part, and by availability and response (through invocation) on ours. This intersubjective relationship tends towards culmination in an intimate union of love, first established on the human level where we welcome and are welcomed into the fellowship of being. Natural theology, Aquinas observes, is the last area of exploration for the enquiring mind.<sup>94</sup> The being of others, however, is not God, for that would be pantheism. Being is dynamic, it is creative. Being is what makes or "lets" other beings be. Being is revealed in things only in a limited manner by virtue of their finitude. Thus Being hides and reveals itself at the same time.<sup>95</sup> In theological terms, Deus revelatus is at the same time Deus absconditus. Herein lies the Mystery of Being : its totality

is situated in transcendence. Being is, and is gradually revealed - in fact reveals itself - as the Absolute Transcendent "which we call God". God is.

Marcel does not, however, completely reject the conceptualized attributes of God. He even uses some himself, as his critics have pointed out.<sup>96</sup> Moreover, he is by no means hesitant in applying himself to considering such theological questions, in this context, as the matters of revelation and miracles.<sup>97</sup> On the score of attributes, he defends himself by asserting that the attribution of supernatural powers and properties to God has value only if we can somehow use them to discover the qualities of the Absolute Thou without reducing the Thou to human proportions.<sup>98</sup> But the traditionalists have no intention of reducing the classical attributes of God to human proportions, and Marcel's term "Absolute Thou" certainly contains elements of classical attributes. Marcel is just unwilling to recognize that he is using the same approach. For if we are to speak of someone with a view to identifying and describing him, we cannot do without qualitative predicates.

Marcel reminds us that the affirmation "I am" should be whispered in humility, fear and wonder, since being is a gift granted to me so that I can walk in the Light of God.<sup>99</sup> My reaction to this awareness of my being as a gift should be gratitude, not the pride of an assumed self-sufficiency. The more God is for me, the more I am; herein lies the nexus of the intimate relationship between us. It seems to Marcel that if an advantage (by which he presumably means the advantage of "being", considered in its potential) can ever be considered as a gift, it is inasmuch as it comes to be regarded as a disguised form of the gift that God makes to me of himself.<sup>100</sup> This is the significance of the fellowship of being towards the realization of which I am impelled by the ontological need. My approach to God lies in the invocation of him as my Absolute Recourse. I do not count on my own strength (remembering that Christ said, "Without me you can do nothing"), but by my prayer I accept the initiative and open an infinite credit to God. Thus my weakness is fortified and consolidated by his strength.

Pour que s'accomplisse le renversement de perspective indispensable, pour que ce qui semblait une déficience infinie se révèle une plénitude infinie, il faut que la conscience, par un mouvement de conversion décisive, s'immole devant Celui qu'elle ne peut qu'invoquer comme son Principe, sa Fin, son Recours unique. (101)

This gift of self to God is unconditional; my prayer should not have anything like a bribe as a vitiating element. There should be no selfish idea of "If you grant me this favour, I shall do such and such for you", or worse, "If you want me to do this for you, you will have to grant me this favour". Prayer must be characterized by a loving, trusting humility.<sup>102</sup>



Marcel suggests the following formula for a truly "existential" prayer :

Je te demande de te révéler à moi, de te rendre présent à moi, en sorte qu'il me soit possible de me consacrer à toi en reconnaissance de cause - alors que dans ma situation présente, je ne puis t'apercevoir à travers les nuées d'incertitude qui m'enveloppent. Je ne prétends d'ailleurs pas que tu doives attacher pour toi-même un prix quelconque à cette consecration qui ne peut rien ajouter à ce que tu es; mais si tu m'aimes, si tu me regardes comme ton fils, il me semble que tu dois vouloir, non certes pour toi, mais pour moi-même, que je te reconnaisse et que je te serve, puisque s'il ne m'est pas donné de te reconnaître et de te servir, je suis voué à la perdition. (103)

## ii. Towards the presence of God

While making allowance for the rôle of insight (an intuition not gratuitously instinctive but which arises from our initial awareness of the need that there be being) in the structure of his dialectic, Marcel none the less stresses the rôle of analogy through his enquiries into the significance of the experienceable presence. This is elicited by an appeal in the context of intersubjective encounter. It may well be objected that the precondition for our acceptance of any appeal is that we already consider our situation favourable for communication. That is to say, only if we are conscious that an appeal is directed to us, can such an encounter be potentially efficacious. Marcel counters this by positing the prior affective attitude of disponibilité which depends on our free choice to agree or refuse to open ourselves. But, as has been pointed out<sup>104</sup>, this notion does not really answer the objection; it can be argued that disponibilité is the predisposition on which depends our choice to accept or refuse.

What distinguishes authentic existential presence is not the simple fact of the other being present in a purely spatio-temporal situation which coincides with ours. Rather it is the discovery of the other's mutual response as being totally prepared to establish a dyadic relationship which is so intimate as to fuse the "I-thou" into a harmonious "we".<sup>105</sup> What is important, therefore, to constitute true presence is not the "what" but the "who" of the other.

Marcel's position is that the interpersonal relationships of the human level are analogues of the interpersonal relationships between man and God on a sublimated level where the natural and supernatural dimensions of being can subsist in compatibility. The presence of being to being mirrors the presence of being to Being; "human" presence is transcended in Absolute Presence. If we are to reach God, Marcel affirms, it will be through presence by way of grace regarded as an afflux of being.<sup>106</sup> If grace is

the "afflux of being", and if grace, in analogous language, is the sharing of God's "life", we can appreciate that the only valid identification of God is that which he himself supplied (through revelation) : I am who am. God, therefore, is Transcendent Being. God is. Now this statement is not necessarily incomplete, if we recall the thesis given in Chapter 1, that Being is Creativity. God is Being, therefore, because God is Creativity; God is Creator. We can perceive that Marcel has a definite affinity, in this respect, with Augustine who proclaimed that God is Is.<sup>107</sup> We can also see that God is Presence (not a presence, just as God is not a being), for his Presence creates and sustains other beings who are for us in that they are present to us, as we are to them.

In postulating his "presential analogy", Marcel is advocating no revolutionary theory about the humano-divine relationships. The notion of God as Presence, as understood in Marcel's terms, is a constantly recurring theme of the Bible.<sup>108</sup> He who effectively lives in the presence of God - in both the scriptural and the Marcellian sense - understands so well the value of his faith that he needs no justification for it.<sup>109</sup> The unbeliever is as yet not in the state (of mind - or of grace?) to understand fully this justification of the believer. We are led, on the behalf of the unbeliever, to consider the matter of faith, the nature and activity of the Act of Faith, and of faith itself on which depends, ultimately, the acceptance or rejection of God, regardless of the persuasive power of the most elaborate apologetics. This is the content of the next chapter.

## Conclusion

So much has been made of Marcel's apparent anti-rationalism that it would seem that he is antipathetic to any form of reasoning. He is not. His enquiries into the modes of knowledge and experience, for example, reveal a keen sense of discursive reasoning. One objection that can be made, however, is that he does seem to rely rather heavily on what he calls "ontological revelation". This feature can be discerned in his dialectic of the ontological need and also in his circular argument for the "triumvirate" (or "troika") of grace-freedom-disponibilité which leads to an elitist doctrine, that is to say that Marcel presents a dialectic which can really have value only for those persons who will be sympathetic to his own approach. Marcel was dissatisfied with the old-fashioned rationalism which would, in his view, enslave man to abstractions, imposing human schemata on reality in an a priori fashion. In his zeal to restore ontological weight to experience, Marcel seems to have allowed for too much weight; he appears

to concentrate too much on phenomenological descriptions and linguistic analyses at the expense of explanation by reason. In his desire to rectify the completely impersonal tendency of rationalism, he has himself tended to the opposite extreme. Perhaps he would subscribe to René Le Senne's axiom that philosophy is the description of experience. His blunt rejection of Thomist proofs of God's existence came just at the time when he was determined to break conclusively with idealism. We may suggest that his preoccupation with an experiential ontology obscured from him the possible latent existentialism of Aquinas, as interpreted in the modern context by such Thomist writers as Jacques Maritain and William E. Carlo.

Marcel's concern is to show that the individual in his situation-in-the-world can be led to a personal encounter with God. In this respect he counters the bland existentialism of Heidegger whose man is in a world-without-God. Indeed, as Marcel admits, such a personalist approach as he adopts, verges on mysticism. He reminds us, on that score, that the spiritual part of us is never wholly subdued.<sup>110</sup> Our very faculties of mind, memory and conscience bear witness to that. The restoration of the spiritual awareness of our orientation to higher things is made possible in the dimension of what he calls secondary reflection. None the less, as has been pointed out<sup>111</sup>, there are some minds who do need a rational proof of God's existence. The discursive reasoning of these proofs does not necessarily harm the concrete enquiry into God's reality, or the non-objectified conception of God which Marcel demands. Troisfontaines declares in defence of Thomism : "Des doctrines comme le thomisme, par exemple, distinguent parfaitement, grâce à l'analogie, l'objet empirique, représenté en sa forme propre et connu en lui-même, et l'objet transcendant simplement signifié dans et à travers le premier. Signifié en tout acte de raison, et donc objectivé en ce sens dans l'argument. Dieu n'est pourtant atteint en lui-même et rien ne nous autorise à le traiter comme un 'objet' quelconque".<sup>112</sup>

In the course of his Journal métaphysique Marcel gradually decided that rationalism alone was not the means of arriving at a knowledge of existent reality. For him, the dichotomies between thought and being, self and God were epistemological rather than ontological. Nevertheless, he claims, these epistemological distinctions presuppose an ontological unity.

La connaissance se suspend à un mode de participation  
dont une épistémologie quelle qu'elle soit ne peut  
espérer rendre compte parce qu'elle-même le suppose. (113)

While breaking free of the grip of rationalism and impersonal idealism, Marcel none the less strives to retain contact, without compromising himself, with an epistemology viable for his dialectic of the Ontological Mystery.

Working through a realist framework, he shows that epistemology and

ontology can be made compatible. His own vehicle for achieving this conciliation is what has been described as a "personalist epistemology"<sup>114</sup>. According to this, we encounter reality only through communication with it. Marcel seeks to show a "correspondence" between the eternal and personal experience. But this method does not necessarily lead to subjectivism; it gives pre-eminence to real communication as the basis of personal experience. I cannot be cut off from others without being cut off from myself. Knowledge is universal, and even self-knowledge - to be truly authentic - is not egocentric but heterocentric. The starting-point of Marcel's metaphysics is the communion of the "I-thou" relationship, not the "ego sum" of the cogito. It is through the phenomenological study of interpersonal relationships that we can approach a hyperphenomenological appreciation of the reality of God as Absolute Thou.

#### FOOTNOTES TO CHAPTER THREE

1. EPC 266. cf. EA I 121, 151.
  - (a) Concerning a priori proofs : Saint Anselm admits this prior according of belief, making it clear in his Preface to the Proslogion that belief precedes his argument. For him, the purpose of argument is not to give rise to belief but to make possible the comprehension of belief. "Credo ut intellegam", he confesses and describes his Proslogion as "fides quaerens intellectum". On this admission, Anselm's "argument" is disqualified for the purpose of helping an unbeliever "see the light".
  - (b) Concerning a posteriori proofs : For his part, Saint Thomas Aquinas claims that faith presupposes natural knowledge. Nevertheless, he says, there is nothing to prevent a man from accepting, as a matter of faith, something which in itself is capable of being scientifically known and demonstrated (Summa Theologiae, I, q. 2, ad 2m). Aquinas argues from causality : there are two types of demonstration - one from cause to effect, the other from effect to cause. From this principle come his five ways to God : God seen as prime mover, cause, and necessity, and through gradation and governance of being (Summa Theol. I, q. 2, 3 resp.).

In his very interesting essay, "A Form of the Ontological Argument", Dom Mark Pontifex writes, "Ultimately perhaps all arguments for God are variations of a single argument" (The New Scholasticism, vol. 90, No. 298, Jan. 1972, p. 59).
2. ME II 175. cf. EPC 266, EA I 121.
3. JM 255, EA I 151, EPC 263.
4. ME II 177, EA I 151.
5. EPC 260. cf. ME II 175.
6. EPC 267. The need, says Marcel, is for a καὶ τοῦτον τὸν vinculum "qui est lui-même concret, bien qu'en un autre sens tout idéal."

7. EPC 262-270. cf. ME II 176.
8. ST 256-257. He observes, furthermore, that there are some so-called believers who act like atheists, living as if there were no God, yet who would be astounded if they were accused of virtual atheism. cf. Chapter 4, fn 34, p. 130.
9. ME I 19. He adds : "Notons bien la différence entre ces formules et celles de l'agnosticisme courant au XIX<sup>e</sup> siècle : Je ne sais pas si Dieu existe ou non." We shall see in the next chapter, which deals with faith, Marcel's distinction between "believing" and "believing in", which will help clarify his statement made here (p. 111 ).
10. JM 65, 77, 153-157, 223-224, 232, 255, ME II 75-76. As we shall see, this disqualification of judgment lies at the root of Marcel's opposition to theodicy in the matter of the "mystery" of evil and suffering. See Chapter 4, fn 65, pp. 133-134.
11. JM 230.
12. JM 33.
13. e.g. L. Sweeney, op. cit., loc. cit., 103-104.
14. cf. JM 34-35 : "Nier Dieu comme existant ... c'est refuser absolument de le traiter comme un objet empirique, c'est en même temps par suite nier (et la négation se transforme en la négation de soi, c'est-à-dire en la négation d'une négation) que rien dans l'expérience, que rien dans ce qui existe puisse être incompatible avec Dieu, puisse exclure Dieu. La négation de l'existence de Dieu se convertit ainsi en l'affirmation de la puissance de Dieu comme transcendante par rapport à tout possible empirique." And again, JM 35-36 : "La négation de Dieu comme existant entraîne l'affirmation de Dieu comme transcendant." See Chapter 4, fn 17, p. 128.
15. DH 46.
16. EPC 154, "La dominante existentielle dans mon oeuvre", loc. cit., 175. cf. EA I 169, 178-179. See Chapter 2, fn 50 (p. 68).
17. Marcel has remained obdurate in his resistance to Thomist reasoning. Writing in 1932 of the Thomist proofs, he says : "Ce ne sont pas, je crois, des chemins, mais de faux chemins, comme il y a de fausses fenêtres" (EA I 121). Twenty-three years later he has not mollified : "Il me semble qu'il faudrait en finir avec l'idée d'un Dieu Cause, d'un dieu concentrant en soi toute causalité, ou encore, en un langage plus rigoureux, avec tout usage théologique de la notion de causalité. C'est justement ici que Kant nous a montré le chemin sans peut-être aller lui-même jusqu'au bout de sa découverte. Il se pourrait ... que le Dieu dont Nietzsche a annoncé véridiquement la mort fût le dieu de la tradition aristotelo-thomiste, le dieu premier moteur" (HP 63).
18. Through interpersonal relationships between God and the existent being (creature) there is no need for any Kierkegaardian leaps from the finite to the infinite according to a dialectical process which could be invalidated. Such is the negating aspect of the ontological proofs. Marcel sees his own approach, by the concrete experiences of fidelity, hope and love, as more acceptable philosophically than Maritain's "sixth way" - the "eidetic visualization" (see Chapter 2, fn 13, p. 64). In intersubjectivity freedom is maintained : it is in the intersubjective encounter that love "makes" ("lets") the other be free. This is the mutual relationship between God and man.
19. e.g. F. Copleston, A History of Philosophy, vol. 2, Part 2, 27-28; E. Gilson, Le Thomisme (1941), J. Maritain, Existence and the Existent (tr), 12. See Appendix 1 for further treatment of Marcel and Aquinas; Marcel's aversion to Aquinas is more properly an aversion to developed Thomism.

20. Saint Thomas Aquinas, Summa Theologiae, I, q. 3, a. 2 resp.; q. 4, ad 2 resp. God receives esse from ipsum esse subsistens.
21. Saint Thomas Aquinas, op. cit., I, q. 13, a. 11 resp. Aquinas's words are : "Totum enim in seipso comprehendens, habet ipsum esse, velut quoddam pelagus substantiae infinitum et indeterminatum." It can be said that Damascene's expression may be interpreted as a precursor of the rather dubious ontological argument for the existence of God. It is interesting, however, to compare Aquinas's translation - particularly his use of "substantia" - with Damascene's original : τὸ εἶναι οἷον τι πελαγὸς οὐσίας ἀπειρον καὶ ἄοριστον (De Fide Orthod. I, ix, PG 94.).
22. But, as will be noted in Appendix 1, Damascene's use of οὐσία would be understood differently by Augustine than it has been interpreted by Aquinas. See p. 218. For Marcel's comments on "substance", see Chapter 1, fn 123 (p. 40).
23. EA I 184.
24. J.E. Smith, Experience and God, 118. These arguments seem to return to the "ontological argument" and, insofar as that terminology is adhered to, Gabriel Marcel certainly appears to opt for that line of thought - despite his objections to Anselm's presentation - although he reformulates it within the framework of a metaphysics of being. For this is precisely the point : Marcel is not all preoccupied with an ontological argument for God's existence. His "argument" (if such a word is applicable to Marcel's approach) is for God's being, a more sound metaphysical proposition, as far as he is concerned.
25. FP 94. cf. DH 46.
26. FP 65. cf. JM 156, ME I 106-111, ME II 28-34.
27. EA I 168. cf. P. Tillich, Systematic Theology (Chicago, 1951), I, 205 : "However it is defined, the 'existence' of God contradicts the idea of a creative ground of essence and existence. The ground of being cannot be found in the totality of beings ... The Scholastics were right when they asserted that in God there is no difference between essence and existence. But they perverted their insight when in spite of this assertion they spoke of the existence of God and tried to argue in favour of it. Actually they did not mean 'existence'. They meant the reality, the validity, the truth, the idea of God, an idea which did not carry the connotation of something or someone who might or might not exist." Marcel may probably not agree with Tillich on what the Scholastics really meant by the "existence" of God and he resists the expression "ground" ("soubassement") of being. But he does inveigh against atheists who treat of God as "someone who" (see Chapter 4, pp. 113-114).
28. J. Macquarrie, Principles of Christian Theology, SCM, 1966 (London), 99-100. Macquarrie furthermore distinguishes God's being as "holy being". cf. his God-Talk, London, SCM, 1967, p. 101.
29. FP 23-67 (Ms XII). On the matter of awareness of God and "experience" of God, Marcel writes : "S'il y a une expérience de Dieu (et c'est seulement en ce sens que l'on peut parler d'existence de Dieu) cette expérience doit être un point de départ, et rien de plus" (JM 32).
30. DH 40. This is the error of supposing that words must denote things, i.e. things that exist. This is, of course, the whole problem with the ontological argument as we know it. Marcel recognizes only too well the inadequacies of language to convey exact meaning.
31. FP 45. The phrase "concrete abstraction" is, to say the least, disconcerting.

32. His assertion is supported by Maritain (not that Maritain in any way had in mind a defence of Marcel) : "The intuition of being is not only, like the reality of the world and of things, the absolutely primary foundation of philosophy. It is the absolutely primary principle of philosophy (when the latter is able to be totally faithful to itself and achieve all its dimensions)" - The Peasant of the Garonne, p. 111. cf. Chapter 2, fn 58 (p. 68) for the view by the English school of philosophy of Marcel's metaphysics - in O'Malley's eyes.
33. K. Gallagher, op. cit., 125.
34. Marcel's understanding of the term "hyperphenomenology" is given in the continuing script (pp. 79-81). The question of being itself belongs to the dimension of secondary reflection since the initial question, "Is there being?" (which is properly anterior to the question "What is being?"), demands too high a level of preliminary thought (JM 173).
35. ME II 67.
36. EA I 147-148.
37. EPC 121-123. This is what, in effect, Pietro Prini calls the "methodology of the unverifiable" as seen in the title of his important work, Gabriel Marcel et la méthodologie de l'inverifiable.
38. See Chapter 1, p. 21.
39. L. Pamplume in "Gabriel Marcel : Existence, Being, and Faith", 89. in Yale French Studies, No. 12, 1965 - "God and the Writer", 88-100.
40. EA I 152-153.
41. P. Prini, op. cit., 119.
42. P. Prini, op. cit., 117. cf. Pierre Colin in Existentialisme chrétien : Gabriel Marcel, ed. E. Gilson, 104.
43. The phenomenologists express this rather simple fact in over-dressed terms. Following Husserlian terminology, we may say that at all levels human consciousness is "intentional" in character (see Chapter 4, p. 114) "noetico-noematic" in structure. Noesis (νόσις) is given by the Oxford English Dictionary as "the sum-total of the mental action of man"; noema (νόημα) as "thought, that which is perceived" or "understanding", and noematic is given as "originating or existing in thought or the mind alone". To say that human consciousness is noetico-noematic in structure is to say that the act-of-the-consciousness (noesis) directs itself (intends) towards its object as the latter-is-presented-to that-consciousness (noema). It would then follow that any analysis of a conscious experience would be described in terms of a noetico-noematic structure.
44. Gabriel Marcel in his Lettre-Préface to Prini's work, op. cit., 8. The term is used and illustrated in Marcel's play, le Signe de la croix: see Chapter 5, p.
45. PACMO 81. While Marcel is no doubt recognizing affinity, it can be objected that, applied in a spiritual context, this idea borders on identity of souls, i.e. that there is no separate identity (or individuality) of souls. But this is not the case. Marcel does recognize separate identity : it is of our basic freedom to choose, each individually, to reject or respond to the appeal emanating from the other to join forces, so to speak, through presence in a recognized ontological unity. Even after union, we retain our separate and corporate identity.
46. The appeal may be addressed, not simply by word or print, by way of a smile, an intonation of the voice, an exchange of looks, or even by an intangible quality of a period of silence - something similar to

- "love at first sight" (EA I 88, PACMO 83, DH 95). cf. Pascal Laumière's experience (RPR 143); see Appendix 2, III B, p. 230.
47. "Dyadic" : meaning "between two parties". Early in his investigations into relationships, Marcel observes that any verification ( a form of objectification) presupposes a "triadic" relationship (triadic : three-sided) in which I treat the other in the "third person", as a "he". Even a "you" can become a "he" (JM 160). But, Marcel affirms, as long as love is free from all possessive desire, it appears on the level of the "dyad", that is on the level where a "you" (more properly a "thou" - tu rather than vous) can never be converted into a "he" (Schg 69). On this point he welcomes Buber as agreeing with him (Schg 74, 78, 82, 87). cf. EA I 132-133, EPC 60.
  48. ME II 12. Hocking notes that just as there is no "I think" that is not thinking something, "We are" is an unfinished statement; and later that "The 'We are' is the unitary expression for all of human experience, or for none." ("Marcel and the Ground Issues of Metaphysics" in Philosophy and Phenomenological Research, vol. XIV, No. 4, pp. 452, 459.
  49. PACMO 83-84, EPC 22, DH 96. Yet, Marcel warned earlier (EA I 101), co-presence cannot be expressed in terms of co-existence. He had already in mind the ultimate co-presence in the Presence of God.
  50. cf. le Dard 118, SC 159-160, 175, MTNPLV 193, les Coeurs avides 91-92, 149 (and, in a lighter vein, 49-58).
  51. PACMO 78 : "La présence est mystère dans la mesure même où elle est présence".
  52. EPC 19. See Chapter 1, fn 119, p. 39.
  53. JM 304 : "Il faudrait donc qu'il fût possible, sans attribuer au Toi absolu une objectivité qui ruinerait son essence même, de sauver son existence. Et c'est ici que mes tentatives pour dissocier l'existence et l'objectivité prennent toute leur signification." See Chapter 1, fn 84, p. 36.
  54. cf. Ch. Widmer, Gabriel Marcel et le théisme existentiel, 121 : "Cette théorie de l'existence comme présence originaire au monde se prolonge, avons-nous établi, dans la théorie de l'être ou de l'amour comme communion ou présence immédiate à autrui."
  55. Leslie Dewart uses this idea of the presential "be-ing" of God in his controversial book, The Future of Belief (1967) : "The reality of human transcendence discloses the presence of a reality beyond all actual and possible empirical intuition, if in the presence of myself to myself I find that over and above my own agency (and indeed as the ultimate condition of this agency) there is a presence which 'reveals me to myself' in a supererogatory and gratuitous way, that is, by making me 'more fully myself' than I should be if I were not exposed to its impact'." Commenting on that passage as the only valid "proof" for the existence of God that he knows, Dewart hastens to add : "I should underline that the 'proof' I have suggested above not only has nothing to say about God's 'existence' properly so called, but that it is hardly a proof in the classical sense of the term. It concerns a reality which is not the object of any actual or possible empirical intuition. Therefore, it is an essentially unverifiable argument. It is always possible to look at the same facts and find nothing but the absence of God. This is why I have formulated the argument in hypothetical form" (pp. 177-178). We may note that God - named as God - is absent from Dewart's "proof".
  56. Saint Augustine, Confessiones, XIII, 31, 46 (PL 32, 865) : "(Deum) non aliquo modo est, sed est est." See Appendix 1 B, p. 221 (fn 38).



57. cf. Hugh of St. Victor, Summa Sententiarum, tract. I, 4 (PL 176, 50 C) : "Est ergo Deus ubique per praesentiam sive essentiam; et aequaliter in omni loco, sed non est in loco, id est, non est localis."
58. "Réponse à une enquête sur l'idée de Dieu", loc. cit., 39. cf. EPC 260-271, and EA I 214 : "Dieu ne peut que m'être donné comme Présence absolue dans l'adoration; toute idée que je me forme de lui n'est qu'une expression abstraite, une intellectualisation de cette présence; et c'est ce dont je dois toujours me souvenir lorsque je cherche à manipuler ces idées, sans quoi elles achèvent de se dénaturer elles-mêmes entre mes mains sacrilèges." Du Refus à l'invocation was republished in 1966 as Essai de philosophie concrète. For Marcel's view on "demonstrative philosophy", see ME I 8 (epigraph to this chapter, p. 73).
59. PI 138, 39. cf. Appendix 1 A, p. 213-214.
60. See p. 80.
61. PACMO 90.
62. PACMO 91 : "Pour résumer ma position sur ce point particulièrement important et difficile, je dirai que la reconnaissance du mystère ontologique, où j'aperçois comme le réduit central de la métaphysique, n'est sans doute possible en fait que par une sorte d'irradiation fécondante de la révélation elle-même, qui peut parfaitement se produire au sein d'âmes étrangères à toute religion positive quelle qu'elle soit, que cette reconnaissance qui s'effectue à travers certaines modalités supérieures de l'expérience humaine n'entraîne d'autre part aucunement l'adhésion à une religion déterminée, mais qu'elle permet cependant à celui qui s'est élevé jusqu'à elle d'entrevoir la possibilité d'une révélation tout autrement que ne pourrait le faire celui qui n'ayant pas dépassé les bornes du problématique reste en deçà du point où le mystère de l'être peut être aperçu et proclamé."
63. ibid.
64. ME I 178.
65. Schg 85. cf. PACMO 80, EPC 83, ME I 178.
66. EA I 104 : "L'avoir comme indice d'une indisponibilité possible ... Tentation de penser que n'avoir plus rien c'est n'être plus rien." cf. JM 301-302, EA I 86, 90, 155, PACMO 84.
67. Seymour Cain, op. cit., 66.
68. PACMO 82, 86, PI 122, 158, 165. Characters in Marcel's plays who display indisponibilité include Perrine Champel (MTNPLV), Laurent Chesnay (MC), Aline Fortier (CA), Ariane Leprieur (CdC), and Moirans (PdS); those who are open, permeable to others, include Béatrice Soreau and Werner Schnee (le Dard), Simon and Jean-Paul Bernauer (SC). See Appendix 2, IV.
69. Ch. Moeller, Littérature au XX<sup>e</sup> siècle et christianisme, vol. 4, 248-249, P. Prini, op. cit., 119. cf. ME II 8, 19-20, 27, PI 191, and Marcel's comments on the revelatory myth of Orpheus (who symbolizes man) and Eurydice (who symbolizes mystery). Orpheus was sustained by the presence of Eurydice yet could not look upon her for fear of losing her. PI 35, 132, "Regard en arrière" in Existentialisme chrétien : Gabriel Marcel, 129. See Chapter 6, p. 191.
70. PACMO 84, ME I 100. cf. Claude Lemoyne's attitude to Osmonde whom he treats as just another "case" (HdD 69; see Appendix 2, I, p. 224 ). In a different way, Etienne Jordan (le Regard neuf) sees his parents, as though for the first time, as they really are.
71. PACMO 83.
72. ME II 141. cf. HV 131-132.

73. ME I 222-223.
74. ME II 110, PI 115-116, HP 68, 70-71, HCH 187. See Chapter 1, p. 22, Chapter 2, pp. 46-47. cf. DH 120, 197, ME II 113-114, ST 226, TM I 307.
75. HP 68. cf. EA I 90.
76. HP 75 : "... c'est ce que j'ai toujours appelé l'invocation, cette invocation dont la formule pourrait être énoncée ainsi : toi qui seul possèdes le secret de ce que je suis et de ce que je suis apte à devenir."
77. See Chapter 2, pp. 46-47.
78. This is an example of what William James calls a "live, forced, and momentous option" (The Will to Believe, New York, Longmans Green, 1909, pp. 3-4). But it is not like Pascal's wager (ibid, pp. 5-6) so that one might say, "What have you to lose if you don't believe in it?" (in this context, the ontological need). Marcel is not some "little sentimentalist who comes blowing his voluntary smoke-wreaths and pretending to decide things from his own private dream" (ibid, p. 7). As we have already observed, Marcel does not appear to decide very much and, anyway, assures us that he will not force his private views on anyone.
79. JM 255.
80. EA I 90, EPC 217. cf. JM 272, PI 187, and SdI (l'Emissaire) 258 : "Dieu notre seul Recours".
81. See Chapter 4, p. 105.
82. JM 277, HV 210, EPC 60-61, ME II 86, TR 87. cf. HCH 187, ME I 167.
83. EPC 19. In the present context of the recognition of presence, it is useful to quote the full passage, at the risk of repetition (see Chapter 1, fn 119, p. 39) : "Au départ de toute création, visible ou non, on découvre la même présence, et, ajouterai-je, la même sommation de l'Etre à l'âme qu'il investit, mais aussi l'acte, identique en ses spécifications infinies, par lequel l'âme rend témoignage à cette même présence qu'il lui est au reste donné de pouvoir récuser, c'est-à-dire annuler, dans la mesure même où elle est âme, c'est-à-dire liberté." The significance of this passage can be appreciated in the light of the identification made, in Chapter 1, of Being and the Spirit of Creativity. Perhaps it is in this passage that Marcel comes very close to actually identifying Being and God.
84. EPC 218.
85. EPC 217-218.
86. HV 77. See Chapter 5, pp. 159-160.
87. cf. JM 153, 157.
88. JM 46. See Chapter 4, p. 116.
89. JM 66. Emphasis mine. This love, as we shall see in Chapter 6, precludes any attempt at formulating judgments of the beloved. Marcel adds : "c'est bien tant que l'être aimé est pensé comme participant à Dieu qu'il est placé dans cet ordre transcendant par rapport à tout jugement, qu'il est conçu comme valeur absolue."
90. JM 231. Epigraph to Chapter 2, p. 42.
91. Les Coeurs avides 149.
92. Reasoning is none the less necessary. We still need human thought, language, understanding and even, perhaps, experience to interpret and comprehend what has been disclosed. But left with the range and powers of human intellect, we could know only a little of God if he had not chosen to reveal himself.

93. HP 69. It has been objected that Marcel himself seems to leave philosophy behind in favour of the mystical form of reflection. Marcel recognizes this tendency, even if it is "une évasion par en haut" (HCH 99). He immediately gives an illustration of his evasiveness by adding : "Tout en reconnaissant que le mystique selon toute vraisemblance accède à des régions qui lui sont impénétrables, le philosophe se doit, je pense, de maintenir, sans éclat de voix, sans démonstrations ostentatoires, la nécessité du mode de pensée, et je dirai même d'existence, qui est le sien." This is not a convincing argument, it is an example of Marcel rationalizing in an attempt to justify himself.
94. Saint Thomas Aquinas, Summa contra Gentiles, I, iv.
95. As Verneaux says, op. cit., 133, Being cannot be represented or demonstrated but experienced and attested; it cannot be inventoried or defined but recognized and approached.
96. See Chapter 2, p. 60 and Chapter 4, p. 115.
97. See p. 84. Closely allied to the problem of revelation, in Marcel's view, is the element of the miraculous in religious history. (Marcel differentiates between religious history necessarily implied by the act of faith and the natural view of history as held by the critical historians, especially those of the German tradition.) For Marcel, wherever there is revelation, the miraculous is present in the deepest sense of the term, while a miracle can only be understood as revelation (JM 78-79). (H.H. Farmer, The World and God, pp. 109-110, disagrees. Farmer holds that while all miracles are revelations, not all revelations are miracles. It is only when "the experience of God as personal reaches its maximum concentration" that such a concept is really required.) Any encounter with God - and Marcel cites Fatima rather than Lourdes - can be regarded as miraculous, for the course of "becoming" has been interrupted to show (and reassure us of) the abiding presence of God. Accordingly, as far as the notion of history is concerned, there is no interpretation possible for miracles; the historian can only reduce them to the status of natural occurrences (JM 79; cf. FP 92). Miracle, Marcel asserts, can only be defined as a complex relationship of the spiritual order, and can be thought of as miracle only in terms of religious practice, that is of faith. "Si le miracle est pensable, ce n'est qu'en fonction de la foi, c'est-à-dire par delà le dualisme de la matière objective et de l'interprétation subjective, par delà aussi l'idée d'un ordre historique - dans le présent absolu (qui n'est que pour la foi)." (JM 83, 82; cf. EPC 15).
98. EPC 61. See Chapter 4, p. 115. cf. p. 76.
99. ME II 34. cf. ME II 120-122. See Chapter 1, p. 15. This notion of God as the Light which illuminates us, a favourite with Marcel, is founded on the revelation of God by Christ, in the Scriptures and is also used by the great medieval thinkers. e.g. i) in Scripture - Job 3:23, Ps 4: 5-6, 36: 9 ("by your light we see the light"), Wisdom 7: 26; John 1: 7-9, 8: 12, 9: 5 ("I am the Light of the World"); Ephesians 5: 8-14, Hebrews 1: 3 ("Christ is the radiant light of God's glory"), James 1: 17, I John 1: 6-7, 2: 8-11; ii) in the Fathers of the Church - Saint Augustine, De Civitate Dei, XI, xxvii, 2, Soliloquia I, vi, 12; Saint Anselm, Proslogion, I; Saint Thomas Aquinas, Summa Theologiae, III, q. v, a. 4, ad 2m ("he is the light, the illuminating light of our illuminated light"); iii) in Gabriel Marcel - HV 10, 369, HCH 199, ME II 178, 182, 188, PI 193, ST 213, TR 95.
100. JM 206 : "Et sans doute suis-je d'autant plus que Dieu est davantage pour moi : par là se laisse discerner le rapport intime qui nous unit. Ma reconnaissance ne saurait porter que sur le don que Dieu me fait de soi et il me semble que si un avantage peut jamais être considéré comme un don, c'est en tant qu'il peut être regardé comme une forme déguisée de ce don que Dieu me fait de lui-même."

101. EPC 61. See Chapter 4, p. 106.
102. ME II 85-107.
103. HV 152.
104. See Chapter 2, pp. 46-47, and also pp. 86-87.
105. cf. Schg 89, JM 169, PI 159-160, DH 62.
106. HP 69. cf. TM II 170. For this notion to be properly worthwhile, there is a need for concrete approaches situated in the intersubjective perspective. These concrete approaches, which will be considered more specifically in Chapter 5, are fidelity, hope and love. All of these are to be found in Christ who is the "concretization", the incarnation, of God's presence.
107. See above, fn 56 (p. 98).
108. e.g. Genesis 5: 24, 28: 15-18, Exodus 13: 21-22, I Samuel 3, I Kings 8: 10-21, 2Chronicles 1: 6, Job 13: 24, Psalms 11: 7, 27: 8, Ecclesiasticus 24: 4, Jeremiah 35: 19; Matthew 10: 22, Luke 1: 35, John 14; I Corinthians 12, Hebrews 9: 11, I John 3: 5-6, Revelation 21: 3-4.
109. JM 31, 37-38, 42-43, 45, 72, 99.
110. cf. HCH 99. In this view Marcel is supported by Aquinas : "all knowing beings implicitly know God in any and every thing that they know" (Quaestiones disputatae, tom. 3, De Veritate, q. xxii, a. 2, ad 1m.).
111. TM II 378 and E. Sottiaux, Gabriel Marcel, philosophe et dramaturge, 131.
112. TM II 378.
113. PACMO 57.
114. See Chapter 2, fn 52 (p. 68).

## CHAPTER      FOUR

AFFIRMATION

## Faith

La foi, évidence des choses non vues:  
constamment je me répète cette  
formule lumineuse, mais qui n'est  
lumineuse qu'après.

- G. MARCEL, Etre et avoir I, 24.

Le seul Dieu en lequel je puisse croire  
est un Dieu qui accepte, dans un certain  
sens qui veut qu'il soit possible de  
douter de lui.

- G. MARCEL, Présence et Immortalité, 92.

From the outset of his philosophical itinerary Gabriel Marcel concerned himself with the question of man's relationship with God. Because we are trying to establish that God's place is central in Marcel's thought, we must consider what he has to say about faith which is the expression of this interrelationship. Marcel's investigations, therefore, led him to consider the question of faith, a task which would daunt those philosophers who, like him, do not profess to be theologians. Marcel, however, makes his enquiries more complex than would seem necessary by bringing out the relevance of practically every element of his dialectic of participation. These notions he applies in a manner which is more phenomenological than epistemological. When we examine what he considers as touching on faith, it will be appreciated that Marcel's activity is more that of a theologian trying to express his ideas than of a philosopher aiming for elucidation. All too often he starts with general a priori theories which he then extrapolates into his "concrete" metaphysics. He provides a compilation of assertions, interspersed with aphoristic remarks<sup>1</sup>, which are not always clear and which appear to lack evidential grounds.

The extraordinary breadth of the areas into which he delves is shown when they are collated and listed : 1) thought on faith - unverifiability, the will and the intellect, freedom, participation, opinion, conviction, certitude, grace; 2) the act of faith - the fundamental option, evil and suffering, sin, miracles, temptations ("tests"), religion, prayer, the example of the faith of others, fideism and atheism. We can only examine what seem to be his key ideas (those which he treats with more than a passing interest) which bear directly upon his general thought. While some of his other notions and opinions will be considered where relevant, those areas which he develops more thoroughly and which seem, to me at least, to be useful to the purpose of this chapter are : i) the fundamental option, ii) freedom and grace, iii) thought on faith and the Act of Faith, iv) "bad faith", and v) faith a response.

#### i. The fundamental option : to believe or not to believe

Marcel agrees with some of his contemporaries that existential anguish does have a dialectical force, but only inasmuch as it awakens in us the realization that the ambiguities of our situation in the world can be resolved positively by our choice of positive action. This anguish, which he prefers to call uneasiness, should impel us to adopt a stance with respect to existence, whereby we use our freedom to make a deliberate choice which involves a pledge, correspondingly grave, to ourselves, to others, and to God. Each choice, then, implies an obligation of fidelity corresponding to the hierarchical status of the commitment. We may there-

fore take it that Marcel holds that each choice also involves a renunciation of values incompatible with the nature of the commitment. Since what is at stake is our very being, and since our being is the highest existential value for us, an absolute choice is involved.

Because the risks and renunciations of self-interest are greater, the "authentic" existent may well be prudently hesitant; for he never commits himself lightly. Yet, Marcel claims, he is brought to realize, by reflecting on the mystery involved in the affirmation of being, that the Absolute Thou, being more completely within the self than the self itself, can alone answer the fundamental ontological question, "What am I?" The response of the "authentic" existent to this appeal in encounter with the Absolute Thou as his Absolute Recourse must be commitment, proportionately absolute and unconditional. This absolute commitment, as Marcel understands it, is faith.

At this point we need to consider the role of the will in the recognition by the existent of the Absolute Thou as the sole repository of his knowledge of self. For, according to Marcel's dialectic, the authentic existent should be conditioned by disponibilité which, in this context, seems to mean not only his openness of mind but his disposition of will. Faith cannot be a matter for feeling alone; the will must come into play somewhere for consent to be fully accorded. It would seem, then, that this feature of Marcel's dialectic can only be described as voluntaristic. Marcel himself avows that he is not a voluntarist; faith, he insists, cannot be willed. He warns us of the gravity of any voluntarism, at least inasmuch as will is distinct from intelligence. A will without intelligence, he states, would be only a mere impulse, and an intelligence which lacked a will would be devitalized.<sup>2</sup> Marcel appears to have put himself in an awkward position. He explains his position by saying that as a soul approaches faith and becomes more conscious of the transcendence of its "object"<sup>3</sup>, it sees more clearly that it is quite incapable of producing faith by itself. Faith, Marcel affirms, can only be an adherence, a response to an impalpable, silent invitation which puts pressure on the soul, without constraining it. We might note that this pressure is not irresistible. If it were, faith would no longer be faith. Faith, Marcel concludes, is only possible to a free creature who has the mysterious and awful power of accepting or refusing the call (invitation).<sup>4</sup>

The ontological need, therefore, seems to work in more than one way. Besides being the awareness of the need "that there be being", we can only infer from Marcel that it also impels the "authentic" existent to take a stand and make a deliberate choice. This choice, the fundamental option, can then only be decided by the will but by a will enlightened by grace. (Obviously there are further ramifications to this notion of the "correct" choice dictated by grace; these will be considered shortly.) The first

stage in the recognition of God would therefore appear to be the affirmation of being.

Marcel points out that this fundamental affirmation should not be regarded as the originator of the reality of being since the "I affirm it because it is" would seem to presuppose an initial affirmation. Are we to go round in circles, or is it a matter of an infinite regression that can only be terminated if the affirmation is posited as the originating moment? Marcel's way out of this antimony is his notion of the ontological need:

Admettons une sorte d'investissement préalable du moi  
par l'être. (5)

The self nevertheless intervenes between being and the affirmation, in the role of mediator. We are involved in being because we are. It is still up to us to use our freedom, and hence our will as well, to opt for the recognition of "being's grasp on us". Faith, the recognition of the divine freedom as source and guarantee of our freedom, and also of being, is in this way understood by Marcel as a matter for the will.

But God is the Principle of Being.<sup>6</sup> If we are to recognize "being's grasp on us" because we participate in being, we should then recognize that being has its source in Being. And that would in turn lead to the affirmation that we participate in God. Marcel declares that he is no pantheist but he does not satisfactorily elucidate the problem: he appears to evade the issue by changing tack. He directs our attention away from a consideration of Being to that of the ontological status of the person who affirms that he is. "What am I?" is therefore the primary ontological question since it affects the personal existent. The answer to that question, Marcel declares (and he does not presume to answer on our behalf), will enable us to find our position in relation to plenary Reality or Being; and this leads us back to where he left us : to the question of our relationship with God.

## ii. Freedom, grace, and sin

Faith depends on a free choice by the individual existent : a personal decision is involved. At once the questions of freedom and free-will arise.<sup>7</sup> The interrelated roles of freedom and free-will were perceived by Marcel very early in his philosophical career when he was investigating the idea of thought as free. He decided that insofar as thought wants to be free, the particular experiences to which it is bound must seem to be in spiritual relation to it, that is to say that they have been willed (or given). This, he concludes, leads to the affirmation of a will, or "divine freedom" which alone can account for the relation which the free mind establishes between itself and experience.<sup>8</sup> Speaking of divine freedom, he states that it can be affirmed or denied only by freedom (by which it



would seem that he means human freedom, that is by a free individual). A question which arises at once is : what does Marcel mean by "divine freedom"? If this means the freedom of God, it is quite irrelevant whether we accept or refuse (deny) it. It must be understood, in the light of Marcel's comments on freedom (in the human dimension, by analogy), that he means God's free acts as they affect man. We can then affirm or deny that God's freedom (free act) is manifested as "being's grasp on us".

Marcel goes on to note that, from a metaphysical point of view, free-will cannot be denied, but that freedom has the power to deny itself if misunderstood. It is interesting to observe that what Marcel then has to say about the "positive" use of freedom finds theological approbation in Aquinas (whom he had not read at the time and whom he was later to misunderstand). Marcel asserts that a freedom which affirms itself positively is directed towards God since I affirm my will to be. Aquinas maintains that when man makes his first choice in favour of the good (i.e. when he uses freedom "positively"), he turns to God. Marcel joins forces with the great thinkers of the Christian tradition when he concludes that this affirmation of being can be valid only by including the affirmation that I have been willed and created, and the world with me.<sup>9</sup>

The recognition of our ontological status as creatures is an important element of Marcel's dialectic. Being creatures means that we are radically dependent on God to support us. This support is provided by means of grace. Marcel's idea of grace is basically the same as that of theologians (of the Catholic persuasion). This grace can "make good" our predisposition (disponibilité) for further grace ("the afflux of being"). Marcel is translating into metaphysical terms the theological concept of "actual" and "sanctifying" grace. According to this interpretation we may infer that grace as operational in our relationships with others and with God ("sanctifying grace") combines with our disponibilité - inherent or "made good" by initial ("actual") grace<sup>10</sup> - to arouse in us the aspiration for ontological communion ("the Mystical Body") in the pleroma (the fulfilment of being in "heaven").

But it is plain that this solution to the question of grace-freedom-disponibilité which bedevils Marcel's ontology is dependent on the freely chosen activity of faith, of belief in God. Without this presupposition of faith, Marcel's whole notion (of grace-freedom-disponibilité) is sterile and meaningless. In Marcel's metaphysical terminology, the fundamental option is dictated by the ontological need which stems from the realization that man is a dynamic being moving ever forward and outward. (We recall the dynamism that characterizes being and the horizontal and vertical direction of participation.) The fundamental option lies between our affirmation of being (an affirmation animated by our willingness to accept

the vicissitudes of being) and our refusal to open ourselves to the influence of being in communion with others. By this refusal, Marcel declares, we shut ourselves off from our situation and claim an egocentric freedom (aseity<sup>11</sup>) whereby we create our own selves, our own values and even our own destiny. This would seem to be the force of the notion of participation as Marcel uses it to clarify his interpretation of the question of faith. When the relationship of the subject to the Absolute Thou is added to this argument, we can deduce the theological implications in Marcel's metaphysics with regard to grace, the individual and God.

In the connection of grace, it is interesting to consider what Marcel has to say about sin, the "refusal" of the invitation to participate more "authentically" in being.<sup>12</sup>

In effect, Marcel has relatively little to say about sin. He deplores the obtuseness (in his view) of some contemporary thinkers who fail to recognize the problem of evil as the problem of sin when the evil concerned is not natural evil but moral evil. However, he himself leaves much unsaid on the same subject. Sin, for Marcel, is defined as a free act of the individual. It is an act which contradicts the individual's freedom, if we are to accept Marcel's premiss that human freedom can only be defined in relation to the divine freedom.<sup>13</sup> He speaks of the "refusal to be" as the "ontological sin", but does not help our understanding of personal, moral sin by asking :

s'il est vrai que le péché c'est l'acte d'une liberté  
se niant comme telle. (14)

He offers no conclusion and, if he were to defend himself on the score that this is a theological question, he should not have first introduced the question. Sin, after all, is a term charged with theological connotations and, furthermore, is usually understood in personal terms (and not in terms of a personified abstraction like "freedom").

At best we can infer that, like grace, sin operates at all three levels of participation. At the first level, that of the personal existent, sin is man's "refusal to be", his refusal to recognize his ontological status as creature, created in the "image and likeness" of God. At the second level of intersubjective relationships, sin is the rejection of others in favour of egocentrism. But while we could easily interpret sin on the third level as the denial of transcendent Reality, of God, Marcel does not explore the notion of sin as the refusal to recognize the Absolute Thou. This "other side of the (metaphysical) coin" remains unexplored by Marcel. It is a glaring deficiency and we can only say that this omission is in keeping with the fact that he also makes no provision for the opposites of the pleroma, the communion of being, and of God.

### iii. Thought on faith and the Act of Faith

From the outset it must be stated that Marcel understands faith as bearing on God:

Penser la foi, c'est penser la foi en Dieu. (15)

While this may appear to be a self-evident truth, it is none the less an important point to make because, not only is it directly concerned with the subject of the thesis but, Marcel's treatment of the question leads him to introduce certain topics which belong more properly to the domain of theology. When he tried to come to grips with the question of faith - and indeed of reality itself - Marcel's thinking was still conditioned by idealism (e.g. Bradley) but already influenced by Bergson and Hocking. Accordingly, his thought process tends to be cumbersome.<sup>16</sup> If this impression has already been gained from reading his preliminary enquiries, it will be reinforced by what follows.

Faith, he says, appears as the act by which a thought, which denies itself as fixed and existing subject, reconstructs itself (as willed and created) by participation in God (who seems to be defined as the mysterious medium of this re-creation). Faith then appears to reflective thought as that which reflective thought turns into when it is negated; for inasmuch as self-negation is an object of reflection, it is destroyed and reflection is "re-born from its own ashes".<sup>17</sup> What Marcel is really saying in these terms, heavily influenced by Bradley's rhetoric, is that the mind must somehow abdicate itself when it thinks faith, and certainly when it consents to faith. It can also be seen that Marcel uses this argument in favour of his notion of the "recuperative" quality of secondary reflection.

Marcel would appear to be a successor of the "existentialist" tradition in Christian thought through his exposition of the act of faith as both identical with and yet distinct from the thought of faith. He explains that the act of faith is identical with thought of faith inasmuch as the latter remains (as thought) implicit. It is distinct from it inasmuch as it recognizes itself by making itself explicit as thought strictly speaking.<sup>18</sup> He then proceeds to argue that if the reflective dialectic forfeits its validity, it is simply because the discussions on the relations between faith and thought regarding faith can only be sterile. After all his convoluted reasoning, Marcel concludes that there is really no difference between them: if we dissociate belief from thought bearing on it, we are involving ourselves in a process without end or issue.<sup>19</sup> In this context it is useful to observe that Augustine and Bonaventure both hold that faith cannot be external to the thought on faith (not the opposite, of course), but that faith coincides with its very reality. Augustine and Pascal recognize that the ambiguity of existence rests on the paradox of man's greatness which derives from his insignificance. Both hold that man's self-realization is

to be found in God. That Marcel agrees can be seen in his assertion that the "fundamental option" of man is dictated by "being's grasp on us." For Bonaventure, man aspires not to conclude that God exists but to see him. For all four (Augustine, Bonaventure, Pascal and Marcel), philosophy and the act of existing are inseparable; we exist to find our fulness of being.<sup>20</sup>

Marcel, however, seems determined to break with anything that appears to be derived from idealism and cartesianism. He declares that the absolute position of human freedom is involved in the Act of Faith whereby I opt for the transcended reality of my being against the immediate, isolated individuality of the Cartesian cogito. It is, he asserts, the affirmation of the superiority of je crois over je pense.<sup>21</sup> He stresses that this transition, from I think to I believe, must be entirely free; it is constituted not so much by a saltus mortalis as by a negation of thought when it reflects upon itself. There must be, therefore, some measure of abdication by thought in the Act of Faith. Marcel asserts that when the act that thinks faith reflects upon itself (this is the force of secondary reflection), the cogito is revealed as still remaining. Just what he means is not clear, and he does not help us understand his argument by immediately affirming that faith cannot be thought except by being posited by a power that transcends all reflection. This power Marcel calls grace.<sup>22</sup>

Here we must pause and take stock of just what Marcel is saying, to determine if it is anything of real value. The question which arises is: by what conceptual warrant does Marcel proclaim that grace is the power which transcends all reflection? As a phenomenologist he should know (and presumably he does know) that I cannot really intend to do something which I know is impossible. No matter how much I may wish or pretend, if I cannot play the piano, for example, it is impossible for me to give immediate recitals of the works of the great composers. Similarly, I cannot intend another's actions (and Marcel himself insists that I cannot put myself in another's place). And from a strictly philosophical point of view I cannot really claim that "grace transcends all reflection". For such a statement to have validity, Marcel would have to transgress into the domain of theology and thereby exceed his self-imposed limitations. A person can only speak for himself in this matter. Perhaps, in my case, grace does transcend reflection; but I should then be claiming a superiority of reflection (with divine assistance) which is denied the other. The counter-objection may be made that faith is intersubjective, as Marcel claims. On this score he is supported by traditional theology which holds that faith is an interpersonal relationship between me and God. But for any relationship to be truly intersubjective, there must be reciprocal activity. The other must act. In the context of faith the other is God, the Absolute Thou. Grace is then admissible, for it is the activity of God. But in the matter of faith, strictly speaking, Marcel does

not bring out this point of the reciprocal activity of the Absolute Thou. He certainly does not deny it, but neither does he state it explicitly. He implies it in his comments on the appeal to the Absolute Recourse (in the connection of hope) and we may infer this activity of God operating in the ontological need.<sup>23</sup> But the fact remains that, in the matter of faith, Marcel concentrates on the activity of the person, the individual, rather than on that of God.

In an attempt to clarify his own thought on faith, Marcel distinguishes between "believing in" and "believing that". He declares that he is more concerned with "faith in" because, as far as he is concerned, "faith that" belongs more properly to the domain of theology.<sup>24</sup> To explain this idea of "believing in" he makes use again of the notion of "extending credit" by which we put ourselves at the disposal of God. This notion is initially applicable to other beings to whom we relate in fidelity. We can only infer from Marcel that the highest limit of fidelity must be God. It would seem, then, that the distinction between "believing in" and "believing that" is the difference between surrendering to God, as Abraham responded to God, and accepting the mysteries of revelation. Both are involved in the Christian faith : "faith in" is the basis of "faith that" and, besides being fundamental, is more important. The believer's faith in Christ is the foundation for his believing that what Christ said and revealed is true.

"Believing in", the opening of credit, implies confidence in that it is the trust that the other, seen as "thou", will never let me down.<sup>25</sup> This assurance, Marcel affirms, is safely established in the Absolute Thou; the limit of such trusting confidence is Faith itself. In an enlightening passage which sums up most of what he has written on faith (and love) – and which also substantiates the thesis that Marcel at least implies that God is to be identified with Being – Marcel declares :

Et voici à présent l'autre limite: c'est la Foi elle-même, l'assurance invincible fondée sur l'Etre même. Ici et ici seulement, nous atteignons non seulement une incondi-  
tionnalité de fait, mais une incondi-  
tionnalité intelligible; celle du Toi absolu, celle qui s'exprime dans le Fiat vol-  
untas tua du Pater.

Je ne demanderai pas ici quelle est l'obscur, la souterraine connexion qui lie la Foi pure dans sa plénitude ontologique à cet amour incondi-  
tionné de la créature pour la créature ... Je crois profondément cependant que cette connexion existe; et que cet amour n'est pensable, n'est possible que chez un être capable de cette foi, mais en qui elle n'est pas encore éveillée; peut-être en est-ce comme la palpitation prénatale. (26)

Marcel recognizes the antinomy which arises from positing the absolute independence of God : it ties God in with immediate consciousness, and raises the question of stating the existence of God in terms of experience. He notes, as was pointed out in the last chapter, that on the plane of em-

pirical verification that question is destined to be answered negatively.<sup>27</sup> Faith seems to be beyond all possible experimental confirmation or disproof; faith concerns the supra-empirical. God cannot be converted into an equation, he is unverifiable. Faith, therefore, refers to a transcendent reality which cannot be experienced. The experiential cannot be an object of faith but of knowledge.<sup>28</sup> But there is no real opposition between science and faith, as Marcel at one time feared (so great was his desire to break with idealism). For everything in the physical universe, and within the spatio-temporal dimension, is potentially knowable. Science, proceeding as it ought, will reveal more and more of these events which will then become known. When anything is known it is no longer an object of faith. The whole of the physical universe is explicable and, therefore, is not an object of faith.<sup>29</sup>

Philosophical enquiry can show the way to the reasonableness of faith, to recognize even the "intimate solidarity between my free act and the divine will".<sup>30</sup> It can illuminate the choice but only I myself can make that choice. The negation of the Act of Faith is defined by Marcel as being itself a free act : freedom self-affirming, self-actualizing. The act of believing is something I do, something I choose to do; it is neither a gratuitous nor a determined impulse. It is, Marcel suggests, a free act which is "supermotivated" (surmotivé); a response freely given to an appeal founded in love for me to exercise my freedom - paradoxically - by abandoning it in favour of the Absolute Thou who assures me that I will discover it in all its fulness in the most intimate communion in Being. Between God and me, Marcel declares, there must be a relationship of the kind that love establishes between lovers. In fact, love and faith cannot be dissociated. When faith ceases to be love, Marcel asserts, it congeals into objective belief in a power that is conceived more or less physically. I cease to believe in God the moment I cease to love him.<sup>31</sup>

#### iv. "Bad faith"

From a consideration of Marcel's treatment of the question of faith, we may conclude that he is not so much interested in epistemological questions as such concerning the nature of faith. This is the case insofar as he does not fully investigate questions of how we know others may think on the same matter. Marcel seems to be more interested in relating experience to the question of faith and in formulating a process of possible relations of experience. We may take this feature of his enquiry to be the nature of his "personalist epistemology" which is at the base of his "concrete" approaches to the mystery of being (in final analysis the Mystery of God). But he can be criticised for not providing any alternative "object" of belief. Further-

more, as we shall now see, he can be criticized for being as guilty of "bad faith", failing any explicit argument by way of apologia, as those unbelievers whom he accuses. This idea of "bad faith", which he claims to have indicated long before Sartre<sup>32</sup>, is interesting but can be as easily applied to Marcel himself.

Because Marcel is so convinced of the importance of the idea of God that it is central to his whole thought, he must consider the claims and attitudes of those who are opposed to the idea of God and who therefore repudiate the need to consider faith in depth. Among the obstacles to faith which may promote "bad faith" Marcel singles out atheism and fideism. We shall attempt to cut a swathe through the profusion of his comments on both to reach the heart of what he really has to say and to determine if he has thought of elucidating his own position vis-a-vis these "inauthentic" attitudes.

(a) Atheism.

In absolute polarization to faith in God is atheism. It was perhaps due to the influence of Hocking who notes that atheism may be said to live on the perils and dangers of theism<sup>33</sup>, that Marcel has attempted to prune his notion of faith of anything that might appear to be tainted with heresy. With time he has arrived at a distinction between an atheism which is lived (athéisme vécu) and an atheism which is professed (athéisme professé). He defines the former as a certain way of life and of feeling which does not appear to have any reference to atheism considered as a doctrine.<sup>34</sup> It is, however, with the professed atheism that Marcel takes issue. Borrowing a phrase from Henri de Lubac, he describes this attitude as an anti-theism rather than an atheism.<sup>35</sup> Not only does atheistic philosophy deny God's existence, it sets out to prove that he cannot be. Marcel points out that if existence cannot be properly predicated of God, neither can his non-existence. Atheism cannot be objectively refuted, he allows, but neither can it be objectively demonstrated.<sup>36</sup>

Marcel contends that what is denied by both those who profess to be atheists and those who live as though God did not exist, is not always God but a certain image or idea of him. To deny God one must first form some idea of him, and Marcel is inclined to think that the rejection of God by some atheists is based on such a man-made version.<sup>37</sup> He reminds us that his warning - when we speak of God it is not always of God that we speak - applies to unbelievers equally.<sup>38</sup> The atheists, of course, can object that Marcel's idea of God is also man-made (his own); Marcel does not seem to have concerned himself with answering that counter-objection.

The philosopher-atheist's method, according to Marcel, is demystification; he sets out to demonstrate that the believer is suffering from illusions. But then the atheist falls into the same trap as the Christian

apologist : he too claims to possess facts denied to the person he is trying to convince. Marcel accuses the philosopher-atheist of pretending to a lucidity which the believer lacks. Moreover, the atheist claims, more or less explicitly, that his own opinion is generally held.<sup>39</sup> Accordingly, Marcel charges the wilful unbeliever, who dismisses the believer's arguments as mere ratiocinations, as being just as guilty of the inauthentic behaviour of which he accuses the believer. His attitude, Marcel declares, is emotional; it is the same as that of the absolute pessimist who is disappointed that God's ways are not his ways. Marcel concludes that the atheist cannot be regarded as the upholder of objective truth because his own attitude is the most insidiously subjective kind possible.<sup>40</sup>

At this point it can be appreciated that Marcel is more phenomenological than philosophical in his treatment of atheism. In his comments on the unbeliever's idea of God, Marcel is expressing in his own way the more technical notion of Intentionality - and Intentional Inexistence - as put forward by Brentano and which has definite affinities with the Husserlian notion of intentionality.<sup>41</sup> According to Brentano's thought, we may say that while "extentional" language refers to facts that can be verified, "intentional" statements refer to mental phenomena which are presented to the mind but which do not necessarily admit of verification.<sup>42</sup> I may say, for example, of an object on the table before me that I think or believe that it is a book. The object (if indeed it is there) may in fact be identified as a book.<sup>43</sup> Again, I can think that unicorns exist, and the object of my thought is a unicorn; but that unicorn would have a mode of being that is short of actuality and lasts only so long as I think of it. Intentional statements are concerned with matters of thinking, feeling and belief. Any talk of God, then, can only be intentional.<sup>44</sup> The question of whether God exists cannot be handled "extentionally" (i.e. objectivley) : any God-talk must refer to beliefs or thoughts. As far as Marcel is concerned, God is not an object in the phenomenological sense. In this respect Marcel agrees with both the classical tradition (represented by the medieval scholastics) and with Brentano.

But while Marcel is justified in disposing of the "idea of God" entertained by the atheist, he does not appear to have come to terms with the corollary of his argument. Equally, to affirm God, one must first have an idea of him. This idea may coincide with reality so that ideas of God may coincide with Being who is God. But, of necessity, the coincidence must be mediated through an idea. In his comments on the atheist's view of God, Marcel is plainly implying that there is something wrong with that view. It is, therefore, incumbent on Marcel to show how that view is wrong. After all, he himself depends on his own view which can only belong to the domain of what Brentano calls "intentional inexistence".



This applies also to his talk of the intersubjective "Absolute Thou" which depends on "intentional" thought. As much as for the atheist's conception of God, there is a danger that there may be no reality corresponding to this idea. At the same time as attacking both atheists and theist rationalists on their approach to God, Marcel seems to be making God not only unverifiable but unfalsifiable. He follows Kant in his declaration that existence is not a predicate; existence is the presupposition of all predicates. To attach predicates to a subject presupposes the existence of the subject.<sup>45</sup> Marcel declares that predicates or attributes cannot be attached to God on the score that these presuppose God's existence. Existence, he argues, is not predicatable of God but is a precondition of the attachment of predicates. Now, if Marcel is to adhere to that principle, he cannot say anything about God. The notion of God is then unfalsifiable. To say anything about God is to presuppose that God is a subject. But Marcel does say a great deal about God and does apply predicates by implication to God. The principal of these is "the Absolute Thou" who, we may infer from all that Marcel says, is a subject of love, thought, concern. But it stands to reason that God must have the power to do this : he must exist as a power. And this is in effect what Marcel does say, if we are to accept the thesis that his concept of Being is of Power, of Creativity.<sup>46</sup>

(b) Fideism.

Belief, then, opens a credit in favour of the One in whom I believe. There is more to faith than just belief. This is what was recognized by the writers of both the Old and New Testaments.<sup>47</sup> The early Christians were sustained by more than faith as belief : faith without deeds is of little value. Marcel also recognizes this and, while giving so much attention to faith, cannot be accused of fideism. Nowhere does he posit faith as a value supreme in itself. Faith is neither objective nor subjective, but intersubjective participation. It is impossible, Marcel asserts, to think faith without participating in it, and this notion of participation in being involves the communion of fellow-existents, as well as Being (God) itself. The activity of believing in God is given concrete manifestation in one's fidelity to God in the persons of one's fellow-beings.

Marcel's awareness of the snare of fideism came to him more forcibly through one of his early plays, le Palais de sable (written fifteen years before his eventual conversion and baptism), than through his philosophical enquiry. In fact, he refers to this play in his Journal métaphysique, written shortly afterwards, to "concretize" some of his statements on faith. It was by bearing in mind the fideist attitude of the play's protagonist, Moirans, that Marcel assures us he was able to pinpoint the dangers of a subjectivist interpretation of any idea proposing that faith can be judged

from within. Such "sandcastles" built up to idealize faith by cutting it off from its "object" are to be rejected.

Moirans's basic fault is pride : he claims to be free of the "illusion of the object". By steering clear of the Charybdis of objectivism, he is caught in the Scylla of subjectivism, and his wretched fate served as a warning and a lesson to Marcel.<sup>48</sup> "La véritable foi", Moirans proclaims, "surmonte l'illusion de l'objet; elle sait qu'il n'est pas de roc tangible auquel les hautes pensées se heurtent. Nos pensées sont à elles-mêmes leur seule réalité, elles se refusent à se suspendre aux terrasses interdites du monde."<sup>49</sup> God does not seem to figure at all; there is no apparent communication. Beliefs and their symbolic images are what count to the fideist, even if he has only illusions to which to cling. Moirans says of these "divine" images that they are to be loved and adored for themselves. Faith or belief, for him, "ce n'est que cela, l'adhésion de toute l'âme, l'adhésion fervente à un beau rêve qu'on sait n'être qu'un rêve."<sup>50</sup> Moirans's idea of freedom is not far removed from that of Sartre : it is a solitary freedom which entails the courage to accept it even if it holds on to nothing. Beyond a freedom which is exercised in the absolute, he is led to assert, there is no longer anything but emptiness. To which his favourite daughter, Clarisse, retorts that one cannot believe either in the abstract or in the void.<sup>51</sup>

This reply contains the clue to Marcel's opposition to fideism. For, as he observes, as soon as faith ceases to appear to itself as absolutely bound up with its "object", it negates itself as faith. Marcel rejects fideism because when it affirms faith, it in fact suppresses it. Fideism, he explains suppresses faith insofar as it destroys the unity of faith and its "object": it establishes a dualism between faith and its "object". Marcel sees the mission and originality of faith as being to surmount this dualism. Faith has no truth that permits it to be isolated from the ideal realities upon which it depends.<sup>52</sup> By adopting this position Marcel is upholding the orthodox view which teaches that the fideist is wrong by holding that the object of faith cannot be known or grasped by the understanding. Fideism sees faith as an act of the will rather than of the understanding; God is placed beyond human understanding. This priority given to the will leads to a divorce (a dualism) between the object of the will and God himself. Fideism is thus voluntaristic; furthermore, there is the possibility that the will can create its own object.<sup>53</sup>

The important thing about faith is that it depends on my action of choosing to give assent. We may then say that the mind is only created as mind by faith in God<sup>54</sup> but, Marcel immediately points out, this faith in God involves the affirmation that it is itself conditioned by God. This means that the mind posits God as the positer. If so, Marcel asks, can the distinction between appearance and reality continue to subsist? That dis-

inction, he says, is entirely relevant to the movement of thought and is rendered void (supprimée) in the act of faith which restores to the world its reality.<sup>55</sup> It would seem, then, that the act of faith posits God as independent of the act which posits him.<sup>56</sup> But, for all that abstruse reasoning, Marcel does not seem to have considered whether the Absolute Thou is dependent on an act of personal decision.

Faith is not situated in the acquisition by the intellect of the knowledge of divine things. The activity of believing is distinct from the content of faith which can be known without belief being accorded. An unbeliever is capable of directing his intellect to the content of a belief while withholding any believing activity. The intellectual activity is, in a sense, secondary because the primary dimension is choosing to give an assent to the reality of the non-experienceable. Now, while Marcel speaks of the "bad faith" of the unbeliever, the professed believer may himself be guilty of such bad faith if, in the name of Faith, he falls into the trap of thinking that faith is an end result of a rational enquiry. Such an enquiry may well be valuable and enlightening but of itself does not obtain or guarantee faith. Real assent of the whole person, in which the will is involved and not just the intellect, is required so that it truly becomes consent. It is not just assent of the intellect alone, for the intellect is constrained by evidence to give its assent. Again, it is neither assent of the will alone, for that is a "leap in the dark" in the Kierkegaardian sense. Faith is not a blind choosing. The assent of belief is a fusion of both will and intellect in a sort of "dialectical convergence" in which the "abstract and personal, incommunicable elements flow together into an upward stream".<sup>57</sup>

Plainly, Marcel does not proclaim that faith contains its own guarantee, that faith is sui generis certainty. What he does insist on is the "realist aspect" of faith in that the believer never encloses God within the circle of the relations between God and himself. Faith, Marcel says, is creative of the individual as being who participates in God by affirming that God is the transcendent father of all men. This statement is not to be interpreted as subjectivism or pantheism.<sup>58</sup> Faith is neither a datum of the mind nor an immanent act; it is the culmination of a dialectic oriented towards transcendence. Faith is not an end in itself but an activity. Marcel tries to show this in his distinction, already mentioned, between je pense and je crois.<sup>59</sup> To try to restrict faith within the limits of the je pense is to rule out of court the notion of being (in its active sense of creativity). Just as the writers of the Scriptures do not provide a noun for the activity of believing, Marcel realizes the need to extend "faith" beyond the notion of "belief" itself. The appropriate verbal expression which he uses throughout his dialectic of individual yet reciprocal participation in being is "to open credit". This expression conveys the ideas of faith, trust, confidence, love and dependence.

v. Faith as response

(a) Faith and the trials of life (evil and suffering)

Faith is dynamic, it is not passive; nor can it be regarded as secure once attained. It is not a talisman but life. In life joy and anguish continually "jostle each other"<sup>60</sup> for, since faith my being in relationship with God and since my being is at stake, faith will constantly be menaced by temptations to despair and betrayal. Life is a battleground on which we fight to save the "child of eternity" which is our being. Marcel assures us that it is of the essence of faith that it ought to be tried: it needs to be tested.<sup>61</sup> But for there to be a testing, there must be a judgment of self, and Marcel declares that no-one knows his capacity to cope with temptation.<sup>62</sup> Accordingly, if the temptation arises it will constitute a test for the individual but only on condition that the judgment on self for which it affords the occasion is efficacious and has a transforming value. The essence of the trial, as Marcel sees it, is to unite oneself more strongly both to the self and to God through fidelity which overcomes death. To triumph in the trial, he declares, is to save oneself as soul, it is to save one's soul.<sup>63</sup>

Perhaps the greatest trial in life is the reality of evil and suffering in the world. Certainly it constitutes a temptation, in the spiritual sense, against the rationality of belief in a God who is said to be all-good and all-powerful. The problem of evil and suffering is important as it affects belief in God.

Il est trop clair... que, en dépit de toutes les argumentations auxquelles ont eu recours théologiens et philosophes depuis les origines, c'est dans l'existence du mal et de la souffrance des innocents que l'athéisme trouve sa base permanente de ravitaillement. (64)

Marcel's solution to the problem is simple - and unsatisfactory. Bypassing the arguments of theodicy, he declares that, since suffering (and evil) affects the individual sufferer and not the "spectator", it is more properly a mystery to be lived through than a problem to be discoursed and analysed.<sup>65</sup> But Marcel overreaches himself, so it appears to me when he asserts that by viewing evil from the "outside", the spectator not only arrogates to himself immunity from the illness but, in the case of evils present in the world, assumes an exteriority to the universe by which he claims to be able to reconstruct it in its totality. Certainly, he should then adopt a position which is completely false and incompatible with his real situation.<sup>66</sup> Such a position is possible vis-à-vis illness but highly improbable - unless that person is a megalomaniac - with regard to the universe.

Marcel goes on to affirm that I can have the right to interpret another's suffering only if I share in them (through intersubjectivity) and only he

who shares in my suffering can appreciate mine.<sup>67</sup> The immediate task of the sufferer, and therefore of him who shares in the suffering, is to cope with the evil and maintain his spiritual existence against the dangers menacing him. For there can be evil only for a being capable of being menaced, and in fine, Marcel declares, having disposed of natural evil by way of rationalization, the only real evil is moral evil - sin - which catches us out "en traître".<sup>68</sup> It is, he believes, an integral aspect of the hazardous character of being to foster the salutary fear which is the beginning of wisdom. Life is a constant trial; and Marcel understands "trial" as bearing essentially on that which is in us capable of passing beyond nature. There is, of course, a risk inherent in any trial, and in the test of suffering the individual can refuse to treat suffering as a test<sup>69</sup> or again he may succumb to the danger of being obsessed by it, exposing the soul to the risk of having all its attention drawn to a particular object. Should that object disappear, Marcel says, the soul is left attached to nothing, not even to itself, and thus may be lost.<sup>70</sup>

In principle, Marcel agrees, suffering is an evil; it is evil. Nevertheless he believes that the human soul, under certain favourable conditions (animated by disponibilité and openness to others) can freely transmute suffering - not exactly into something good - but into a principle capable of radiating love, hope and charity.<sup>71</sup> The driving impulse of this transformation is the predisposition of the soul, while yet suffering itself, to open itself up more to others and not to close in upon itself and its wound.<sup>72</sup> The man who is fully sharing in being will see suffering and evil as tests sent from the transcendent "other kingdom". He will accept these trials only if he maintains a personal relationship with God, a relationship which in the highest intersubjective order is between thou and the Absolute Thou.<sup>73</sup> Evil, Marcel concludes not very convincingly, remains in this world as a paradox, for it is real and yet unreal when conquered by grace.

Il reste qu'en face du mystère du Mal, après tant de possibilités se sont évanouies, la seule voie qui demeure ouverte est celle du paradoxe, au sens de Kierkegaard, celle d'une double affirmation qui doit être maintenue dans sa tension: le Mal est réel, nous ne pouvons récuser cette réalité sans porter atteinte à ce sérieux fondamental de l'existence qui ne peut être contesté sans qu'elle dégénère en un non-sens ou en une espèce de bouffonnerie affreuse; et pourtant, le Mal n'est pas réel, absolument parlant; nous avons à accéder non à une certitude, mais à la foi en la possibilité de le surmonter, non pas abstraitement, certes, c'est-à-dire en adhérant à une théorie ou à une théodicée, mais hic et nunc; et cette foi qui nous est proposée n'est pas sans la grâce, elle est la grâce; et que serions-nous, que serait le harassant cheminement qui est le nôtre, qui est notre façon même d'exister, sans cette Lumière qui est si facile et de voir et de ne pas voir, et qui éclaire tout homme venant au monde. (74.)

Marcel's whole treatment of the subject is not as satisfactory as he might think, despite his claim that he has reflected considerably on the matter before which other thinkers have been "forced to show themselves powerless" in their attempts to explain it as an "irritating problem".<sup>75</sup> For instance, he makes the curious statement that evil ceases to be evil when it is purely stated or considered as evil.<sup>76</sup> But surely a person who is suffering - from napalm burns, for example - experiences the evil as evil? Furthermore, the spectator who is not sharing in the suffering which he is witnessing is not prevented from reflecting on the reasons or explanation of it. Although Marcel inveighs against theodicy, he is really advocating a theodacist proposition. Evil, he affirms, is not an academic question to be solved but a mystery to be experienced and lived through. This mystery, then, must be involved in the overall mystery of Being so that God as Absolute Thou must have a reason for permitting evil and suffering. If evil is a mystery it cannot be incompatible with God. This is theodicy. Through his remarks on creative fidelity, hope and immortality (as the pledge of the continued presence of the loved one), Marcel does imply that suffering can be made compatible with a God of love only if the fellow-sufferers can enter into another life or, as he calls it, the "other kingdom". For all his avowed antipathy to "abstract" theodicy, this is what Marcel is in fact saying when he talks of acceding to a faith (which is grace) in the possibility of overcoming the paradox of evil.<sup>77</sup>

(b) The example of the faith of others.

Faith is a personal act, it is the free commitment of the person to choose to believe in a transcendent reality which will assure his own being. Faith, then, is the "positive" act of the individual who, declaring his status as dependent creature, wishes to enter into personal relationships with God in whom he professes to believe. While still in a neutral zone, i.e. without committing himself to believe, the individual can appreciate the example of others who either have faith or lack faith. This is what Gabriel Marcel claims was his own experience : he could understand the belief of others - he instances the conversions of Claudel and Maritain - before he too crossed the invisible threshold of conversion into faith.<sup>78</sup>

It is in his first published play, la Grâce, that we can detect a similarity - which does not necessarily amount to identification - between Marcel's attitude and that of Olivier, the younger brother of Françoise who is married to the hero, Gérard. Olivier is not a believer but, disenchanted with materialism, he hopes to find an answer to his frustration at not acquiring the faith to which he aspires from the example of the dying Gérard. (Gérard's faith would seem to be more mystical than practical.)

In the final scene Olivier receives Gérard's last words :

Olivier - ... La force de la croyance est sûrement la force de l'être ... Ta foi est réelle à mes yeux comme le rêve et la vie ... Ta foi est plus qu'une vérité; elle est un acte et une création, elle est l'idée même qui réalise et qui transforme ... D'avantage? Je sens toujours peser sur moi ton anxiété.

Gérard, indistinctement - Et Lui?

Olivier - Il est l'esprit qui affirme son unité. Il est la foi qui se dépasse et se projette ... Davantage encore? Je ne peux pas ... Il n'est peut-être que l'exigence suprême des âmes.

Gérard, se soulevant péniblement dans un cri - Dieu est libre. Il retombe pesamment. Il expire et

Olivier, scrutant avec angoisse le mystère du visage pacifié, murmure - Plus rien qu'un regard, et maintenant sur la foi de ce regard ... (79)

Other examples from Marcel's plays of characters seeking support or reassurance in the faith of others include Osmonde in Un Homme de Dieu (she is talking to Claude) :

Quand on est comme moi il faudrait pouvoir trouver un appui dans la foi des autres ... Jusqu'à présent ta foi m'a soutenu, ta foi à toi. Mais quand on est trop angoissé ça ne suffit pas. (80)

and Marc-André in Rome n'est plus dans Rome (he is talking to Pascal) :

Vous avez vécu, vous avez écrit, vous avez aimé, vous avez cru à des choses ... je ne sais d'ailleurs pas à quoi vous avez cru ... Vous devez avoir au moins le sentiment d'avoir réalisé une certaine vocation ... Avez-vous dit un seul mot qui soit de nature à me faire changer d'idée? Si vous avez pu me dire avec une sincérité absolue: la volonté de Dieu est que tu restes [he would have been convinced] . Peut-être si à travers ces paroles il était passé de quoi me faire aimer ce Dieu exigeant s'il était devenu en un clair notre Dieu à tous les deux. (81)

In Un Juste, written well before Marcel's conversion, André Blondville says:

La foi des autres soutient peut-être ceux mêmes qui ne la partagent pas. (82)

An example of the lack of faith contributing to a person's bewilderment at being lost without religion is Laurence Vernoy in Marcel's radio play, la Fin des temps. Laurence had accepted in good faith an expatriate Hungarian whose claim to the authorship of a book is revealed by his wife as an imposture. Laurence had furthermore misjudged her own husband and her elder daughter. Her world is in ruins when her favourite son-in-law to whom she could relate and on whom she has leant for support retires from the world. Alone, she feels abandoned without knowing wherein lies her fault. If anything, Marcel observes, this sombre play shows that the reality of grace can be just as strongly experienced on account of the desolation brought about by its absence.<sup>83</sup> Laurence had so earnestly wished to believe and yet at times has recoiled from the idea. In desper-

ation she concedes, "Il aurait fallu avoir une religion, quelle qu'elle soit."<sup>84</sup> But she is too preoccupied with her own distress to reflect.<sup>85</sup> Benumbed by the destruction of conscience she is, like Ariane in le Chemin de crête, alone without any hope of seeing her way clear to having recourse in the Absolute Thou. On the matter of believing or not in the faith of another, Marcel concludes :

Je peux croire à la foi de l'autre sans pourtant que cette foi devienne absolument la mienne; si je m'installe dans cette situation, elle risque de devenir mensonge. Si au contraire je m'efforce d'en sortir, sans d'ailleurs y parvenir complètement, elle se révèle susceptible de me faire progresser sur le chemin du salut. (86)

(c) Faith and love.

As a result of his conversion, Marcel claims that he saw his way more clearly : his work took on metaphysical meaning in the fullest sense. Faith, Tillich says, is "the state of being grasped by the power of being-itself."<sup>87</sup> Metaphysical need is a kind of appetite, which is the appetite for being. This appetite for being is whetted by faith through which, apparently and in metaphysical terms, the believer comes to realize the transcendental nature of the Source of being, which is Being itself. This entails an entirely new outlook on the whole question of being; it entails a re-birth into the life of faith and grace.

La foi est tout ensemble une mort et une naissance.<sup>88</sup>

This re-birth is made possible by the interaction of love and faith; for one cannot have faith in anyone unless he loves him. The same remains true, therefore, for religious faith in God. Love is at the basis of man's relationships with God. Marcel's interest in this connection is reflected in the plays of the period leading up to his spiritual re-birth or "rejuvenation".<sup>89</sup> Already in la Grâce and in le Palais de sable he had explored the need for intercommunication since "no man is an island". This theme is continued in his post-war (World War I) plays, notably in le Quatuor en fa dièse and in l'Iconoclaste. Of love he had written earlier :

L'amour est essentiellement l'acte d'une liberté qui en affirme une autre et qui n'est pas liberté que par cette affirmation même. Il y a là, à la racine de l'amour, la croyance à l'inexhaustible richesse et à l'imprévisible spontanéité de l'être aimé. (90)

Love is not an abstract but a concrete act and, being of the order of grace (as gift), is gratuitous.<sup>91</sup> While the love of God may be a consequence of faith, it may be just as true that faith is the consequence of love. This latter possibility would seem to find preference with Marcel in his dialectic of the approach to God through the initial predisposition of openness (disponibilité) which allows for the reciprocal response to the



appeal of the Absolute Thou. For just as God cannot be judged, faith cannot be judged; neither can love be judged. Once the notion of judgment enters, love is debased to desire.<sup>92</sup> It is because of love as the cement of the believer's relationship with God as Absolute Thou, that he is led to consider the Absolute Thou as his Absolute Recourse to guarantee his being. The recognition of the usefulness of prayer would validate faith for which an appeal or recourse is a function.<sup>93</sup>

(d) Faith in communication - Prayer.

Through faith the individual communicates with God; his act of belief is his response to God's welcoming invitation. The means of approaching God, in Marcel's view, is the dyadic invocation of prayer. Faith needs prayer as a means of maintaining intercommunication. Whereas I reach faith alone insofar as my decision to believe is free and personal, I sustain my faith in union with God. I invoke God as Absolute Thou to be with me. Such is the essence, Marcel affirms, of true prayer and reveals the possibility of an Absolute Presence.<sup>94</sup>

Marcel points out that prayer can be more or less pure. When it is self-centred it is less pure, but that does not detract from its quality as invocation of the Absolute Thou as Absolute Recourse. Prayer should not be regarded in any contractual sense but rather as the expression of mutual fidelity and trust in the humano-divine us. We should not, therefore, concern ourselves with worrying whether our prayer is answered. Pure prayer cannot be conceived as remaining unanswered if it transcends the hypothesis "There is someone listening ... there is no one." That attitude would objectify God and reduce him to a principle of causality. Those whose faith is shallow or superficial would soon yield to resentment and are shown to be in the same category as those who want God to show himself, to reassure them of their magnanimity in choosing Him.<sup>95</sup> Neither is prayer characterized by optimism : optimism, Marcel declares, equally implies a judgment of God. Instead, prayer is imbued with hope.<sup>96</sup> On a much lower level, prayer cannot be considered as a magical formula to be used in the direst straits when all else fails.

Plainly, then, in his presentation of prayer as the invocation of God by the "authentic" existent who, conscious of his ontological status as creature, relies on the Absolute Thou as guarantor of his being, Marcel is dressing up the traditional (theological) doctrine in terms of his own existential metaphysics. These terms are thinly veiled and the content of his dialectic is so expressed that he does not even present familiar matter in any new light. Authentic prayer, he tells us, is not so much request and cannot be understood as containing in itself its own guarantee. Rather

it should be thought of as depending on the mysterious will of a "power" whose plans we cannot fathom. Authentic prayer, he concludes, is nothing if not a certain very humble, very patient and very fervent way of uniting oneself with God. It is a receptive disposition towards everything that can detach me from myself and unite me to God. Prayer, in fact, is the only living relationship of the soul to God :

La vie spirituelle véritable ne s'ouvre qu'avec  
l'affirmation d'une réciprocité en Dieu, d'une  
réponse, et cette affirmation, c'est la prière. (97)

Prayer is a duty, none the less, for it is the expression of my faith which involves my fellow existents. As the expression of my union with God, prayer manifests and sets the seal on my union with others.<sup>98</sup> Since I have the capacity to pray, I have the right to appeal to God on behalf of another; we are all united in the fellowship of being. I am responsible for what concerns the other in his being. To refuse to pray for him would be to forsake and betray him.<sup>99</sup> This duty, Marcel urges, is all the more imperative in our own age to care for the preservation of the souls (beings) of others and to hope for their salvation. The abbé Petit-paul counsels Agnès and Thierry Courteuil in Croissez et multipliez :

Il n'y a pas de solution, chacun doit prier pour  
trouver sa vie, et je crois - mais cela, je le dis  
en tremblant - que le Souverain Pontife et ceux qui  
l'assistent doivent prier, eux aussi. Il ne leur  
est pas permis non plus de s'établir dans des for-  
mules. Imaginer, réfléchir, prier, nul n'en est  
dispensé. (100)

On the philosophical plane, therefore, prayer is only possible where intersubjectivity is recognized. The highest level of this is our relationship with God, for prayer is more a matter of being - and of being-with - than of "having" :

La prière pour moi ne me semble pouvoir porter que  
sur ce qui est susceptible d'être regardé comme don  
divin, ou plus exactement, je veux prier pour être  
davantage, non pour avoir davantage. (101)

By prayer I transform my being through faith in the Source of all being, but I should not expect or demand that anything should be added to my "having". We find ourselves by finding God through the ineffable invocation of prayer. The concrete approaches (prayer in action) to God are the acts of fidelity and love for others who share the same dangers, faiths and hopes as I. In the last analysis, therefore, I pray to God for us, just as the formula of hope (as we shall see in the next chapter) is "I hope in Thee for us". Marcel shows the intersubjective dimension of prayer, which is also of hope, when he affirms :

Je ne peux prier pour un autre que là où il y a entre  
cet autre et moi cette communauté spirituelle dont  
j'ai tenté d'exprimer le caractère essentiel [I cannot

truly pray for or regard the other as a he but as a thou, just as I can only truly consider God as Thou.]  
 Prier pour mon âme, ou prier pour celui que j'aime,  
 c'est sans doute un seul et même acte. (102)

Conclusion : Faith transmuted into Fidelity.

Faith finds its expression as dynamic force in interpersonal relationships - with myself, with others, and primarily with God. Through faith I truly become myself, I constitute myself as person by freely choosing to break out of the confines of self-centredness and to relate to others; and it is in others that the eternal is mirrored.<sup>103</sup> As I believe in others, I extend myself to them as credit to be drawn upon. Thus faith involves commitment without which there should be no genuine intersubjective faith.<sup>104</sup> There seems to be a hierarchy of commitments, at the summit of which is commitment to God. It is from this commitment to God that Marcel sees the way to elucidate the problem of fidelity if it is to be properly creative and faithful.

Nécessité de partir de l'être même de l'engagement envers Dieu. Acte de transcendance avec contrepartie ontologique qui est la prise de Dieu sur moi. Et c'est par rapport à cette prise que ma liberté même s'ordonne et se définit. (105)

From this statement we can legitimately conclude that Marcel identifies the "grasp of being" (la prise de l'être) with man's innate need to seek after God - the Good of the ancient philosophers - whose appeal can be felt as la prise de Dieu. Marcel, we recall, identifies the great need of the present times as the "need for God".<sup>106</sup> This exigence de Dieu appears to be a translation on a higher (theological, or would Marcel say "meta-philosophical"?) level of the philosophical "ontological need" (l'exigence de l'être). This identification can also be seen in his assertion concerning man's relationship with God :

Je dirais volontiers dogmatiquement que tout rapport d'être à être est personnel, et que le rapport entre Dieu et moi n'est rien s'il n'est pas rapport d'être à être, ou à la rigueur de l'être à soi. (107)

Until his conversion, Gabriel Marcel's philosophical enquiries had been dominated by the question of faith, particularly of faith understood in the context of participation. But with his conversion Marcel shifts the emphasis towards a study of a "concrete" metaphysics through the equally "concrete" approaches of fidelity, hope and intersubjectivity. In fact, his philosophical enquiries are directed towards a study of the attestation of God through the concrete approaches to the Mystery of God.<sup>108</sup> This does

not mean, however, that he no longer concerns himself with faith. The subject is taken up again in his later works but he is now prompted by the desire to show to others in the situation once his own the means of reaching that invisible threshold. There are also elements of the notions of grace and immortality in his earlier works. But, starting from his *Position et approches*, he embarks on an enquiry into the central, unifying notion of creative fidelity<sup>109</sup> which opens on to such considerations as presence (which is perpetuated by fidelity) and immortality (which is fidelity attested). Marcel's studies are henceforth dominated by hope - and inspired by love - yet this does not mean that he ignores the questions of betrayal and despair.

In the following chapter we shall see how faith must not only be affirmed but attested, for faith is unceasing attestation.<sup>110</sup> Attestation in turn implies commitment which, to be authentic, can only be personal. To be incapable of committing oneself is to be incapable of bearing witness.<sup>111</sup> As there are levels of commitment, there is a hierarchy within fidelity and witness. At the highest human level is the martyr in whose sacrifice is affirmed not only the self but the Being to which the self becomes a witness in the very act of self-renunciation.<sup>112</sup> On the meta-physical level, faith translated into fidelity is to be understood as witness perpetuated; and this witness bears on Being.<sup>113</sup> The archetype of witness is God himself, in the person of Christ, the living and personal God and not the god of the philosophers. He is in fact

Celui que tout témoignage invoque explicitement ou non.<sup>114</sup>

#### FOOTNOTES TO CHAPTER FOUR

1. e.g. That grace is the power that transcends all reflection (JM 71). See p. 110. Also he asserts: "L'espérance n'est possible que dans un monde où il y a place pour le miracle" (EA I 94). Although he claims that on this point he "joins forces" with Kierkegaard (or at least, he adds cautiously, with some of his continuators), Marcel gives no explanation of that flat claim.
2. ME II 179. Apparently Leslie Dewart, an admirer of Marcel, does not take sufficient note of Marcel's warning; he certainly can be charged with postulating voluntarism.
3. Marcel is really inconsistent with his assertion that God cannot be objectified (i.e. regarded as an object) when he refers consistently to the "object of faith". He himself does not place the word objet, when he uses it in this context, in inverted commas.
4. EA II 66-67, HP 71, ST 128.

5. EA I 176. He adds, "par moi j'entends ici le sujet affirmant."
6. EPC 61.
7. Man is unique among other creatures in that he is free. This can only be what Marcel is saying when he resorts to linguistic analysis to declare that it is man's freedom which makes him stand out from the rest of creation in the "full" sense of ex-sistere. According to Marcel, freedom is not essentially freedom of choice, especially when choice is conceived as indeterminate (JM 228, ME II 114-117, ST 127, PR-GM 85-87). Rather he sees it as a matter of a fundamental option to be or not to be; it is a matter of accepting or refusing such values as grace, existence, fidelity, the other as fellow-being (thou), and finally God (EA I 118, EPC 154-156, HP 71, ME II 179, ST 128). See Chapter 1, pp. 21-22.
8. FP 104. Marcel proceeds to argue : "Par l'acte de la foi la pensée libre renonce donc définitivement soit à s'abstraire, dans une solitude stérile, d'une expérience qu'elle est impuissante à déduire de soi-même, soit à s'identifier à cette expérience pour s'insérer dans l'intégralité du savoir. Et elle s'engendre elle-même comme individuelle en se rapportant à une volonté qu'elle est obligée d'affirmer sous peine de se nier comme libre et comme concrète ... Nous arrivons donc à cette conclusion paradoxale que l'individualité libre ne peut se définir que par rapport à une liberté divine, et en pensant le monde comme produit de cette liberté." He adds guardedly, "La thèse à laquelle nous aboutissons n'est donc pas du tout celle d'après la liberté serait la nécessité acceptée; car ceci ne vaut que pour un intellectualisme qui place l'individualité dans la participation à la raison, et nous savons déjà pourquoi cette position n'est pas tenable" (FP 105).
9. Gabriel Marcel, FP 106 : "La liberté divine ne peut être affirmée ou niée que librement, que par une liberté et en ce sens métaphysique le libre arbitre n'est pas niable (la négation du libre arbitre le suppose d'ailleurs). Il n'y a donc rien dans la pensée qui ne soit liberté; mais la liberté qui se méconnaît et en se méconnaissant se nie; et nous avons déjà dit qu'elle est la racine du mal [see below, fn 14]; il y a une liberté qui s'affirme et se veut - et nous savons que cette liberté ne peut être que la foi en un Dieu qui la relie au monde. Il est donc en mon pouvoir d'être ou de ne pas être; car je ne serai qu'en pensant et en voulant mon être, en ayant foi en lui - et je ne pourrai penser mon être (puisque ni comme forme ni comme contenu empirique je ne suis rien) qu'en affirmant que j'ai été voulu et créé, et que l'univers a été voulu et créé avec moi."  
 Saint Thomas Aquinas, Quaestiones disputatae, tom. 3, De Veritate, q. xxiv, a. 12, ad 2m : "Ad secundum dicendum, quod non est possibile aliquem adultum esse in solo peccato originali absque gratia; quia statim cum usum liberi arbitrii acceperit, si se ad gratiam prae-paraverit, gratiam habebit; alias ipsa negligentia ei imputabitur ad peccatum mortale." See Conclusion for Marcel's treatment of creation (more properly creativity and man's awareness of his status as creature) and Appendix I A for a comparison and contrast of Marcel and Aquinas.
10. cf. the phrase from Aquinas quoted in the preceding footnote : "quia statim cum usum liberi arbitrii acceperit, si se ad gratiam prae-paraverit, gratiam habebit."
11. "Aseity" (from the Latin a se, by oneself) is given by the Oxford English Dictionary as meaning "underived or independent existence". The term (spelled A-seity) is used by S.T. Coleridge in his "Aphorisms" (Aids to Reflection and the Confessions of an Inquiring Spirit, London, G. Bell & Sons, 1913, p. 224). It must be borne in mind that Marcel's unpublished thesis concerned the spiritual writings of Coleridge; no doubt he used an earlier edition of Coleridge's "Aphorisms".

12. It is interesting, and perhaps significant, to observe that while Marcel refers to God, he has practically nothing to say about Satan or the Devil. In Marcel's defence it can be argued that he is quite rightly restricting himself to metaphysics which traditionally can encompass such questions as God, the "Ground" of Being, and man. The notions of heaven and hell, sin and the Devil, on the other hand, may be termed more properly the concerns of theology. But Marcel does seem to be inconsistent; he does encroach into the theological domain, as we have seen. He speaks of the saints (who do not appear to qualify for his guidelines to the threshold - they have already "made the grade") and vaguely of sinners. He speaks of the ontological communion but not of the possibility of its opposite ("hell"), even though he spends considerable thought on despair and suicide.
13. FP 105. See above, fn 8, for text.
14. *ibid.*
15. JM 40. Marcel adds, repeating what he has already said of the non-objectifiability of God : "Je n'ajoute rien à l'idée de la foi lorsque je dis que la foi porte sur Dieu. Il y a là deux aspects que je dois poser comme solidaires; disons, si nous voulons, que Dieu est la vérité de la foi, mais à condition de ne pas entendre ceci en un sens objectif."
16. Marcel recognizes that abstract reasoning can be a hindrance (yet it must be pointed out that it is really unavoidable) and in this respect, while he claims that he remained sure of the direction of his thinking, these early investigations appear to be confused (Schg 94-95). We may add that Marcel shares with other "existential" thinkers the tendency to express themselves in terms of abstractions. He speaks of "freedom" and "thought" as the active agents when one would normally posit the free or thinking subject as the operative agent of reflection or action.
17. JM 41-42, 51. cf. FP 30, 104, 114. In the light of these apparently negative remarks, Marcel's stand on the question of attempting to prove God's existence is explained (JM 34-35, cited Chapter 3, p. 95 ). God can be thought of as power only on condition that power is not thought of as an existing power susceptible of functioning among other causes (JM 36). Marcel avoids any doctrine of creationism which would posit God as an abstract idea. Creationism is transcended by Marcel in the concept of divine fatherhood, a term comprehensible to phenomenology, which posits God as the centre and source of being.
18. JM 71. Marcel proceeds to reason as follows. Inasmuch as reflection comprehends itself as free, it is free. But the free act (the apprehension of self as "freedom"), when treated as a particular moment, brings about a further moment which destroys it. In that way, by virtue of its ambiguous nature reflection negates itself as freedom. This apparent aporia was resolved by Marcel when he delved into the recuperative force of secondary reflection. These early investigations, awkwardly expressed as they are, serve to clarify for Marcel at least the intimate connection between faith as act and faith posited by thought. The free act ( intuitive thought) implies, therefore, the negation of the dualism between faith and reflection on faith.
19. JM 70-73.
20. See pp. 106-107, 125. Philosophy is seen by Bonaventure as wisdom which leads to Wisdom vested in God. See Appendix I B, p. 219 , for Marcel's affinity with Augustine on the understanding of wisdom , an interpretation in line with Bonaventure's.

21. JM 40-46, 52-53. The act by which I think freedom is the very act by which freedom comes to be : this is the force of the cogito. But the subject of faith must be more than abstract, it must be concrete. It must also be pointed out in all fairness to Descartes that he would probably retort that je crois is an act of the mind. Any act of thinking, according to Descartes, will suffice to show that when I am engaged in any thinking exercise I exist.
22. JM 71. cf. below fn 85.
23. It could be objected that the Absolute Thou (God) takes the initiative by appealing to the individual (through the ontological need). cf. Chapter 3, pp. 82, 87. This appeal is reinforced, as we have seen, by the grace-freedom-disponibilité "triangle" of predisposing the individual in favour of a "positive" response (and there still remains the possibility of refusal). But what Marcel does not seem to have considered - to me at least - is that, granted this initiative by the Absolute Thou, the individual has to wait. But what if the Absolute Thou does not choose to appeal to a particular individual? (One could bear in mind the Scriptural accounts of God's preferences - of Abel over Cain, Jacob over Esau.) This could lead to an objection of selective choice by the Absolute Thou and, besides being an elitist position, this in turn leads to predestination. Certainly, Marcel disavows predestination in the Jansenist sense (meaning the heresy), but he does seem to come close to advocating what could be called a "philosophical Jansenism" in his rather elitist doctrine of presence. The sign at the entrance to Marcel's path leading to the "other kingdom" could well read "Kindred spirits only need apply". For while I may be "present" to only one other in a crowded room, what happens to the others' chances for fidelity and salvation? (cf. Chapter 3, pp. 81-82) Of course, we can clear Marcel of this charge of apparent predestination if the appeal sent by the Absolute Thou is universal. We recall that Marcel speaks of the "Universal" with reference to the Absolute Thou - or at least to the Communion of Being. But he does not make explicit the full significance of the term, "Universal". cf. EPC 18 (Chapter 1, fn 101, p. 38).
24. EPC 201, ME II 78.
25. ME II 79, 81. cf. EPC 202.
26. EPC 205-206. Emphasis mine.
27. See Chapter 3, pp. 75-76. When the unverifiable descends into existence, it substitutes itself for existing causes, and when reflective thought comes back into play it is obliged to operate in an inverse way and reintroduce the causes. Rather, Marcel concludes, "(la véritable dialectique de l'existence divine) n'est que par le rapport immédiat à la conscience empirique; mais ce rapport d'autre part se détermine pour la réflexion comme action d'un existant sur un existant, c'est-à-dire n'étant pas d'ordre divin" (JM 32).
28. Marcel denounces a "religious Esperantism" when he has recognized that faith cannot be treated as a modality of thought in general; there can be, he asserts, no glauben überhaupt (PE 119-120).
29. It can be objected, of course, that if this conclusion is accepted, there can be no "religious experience" in the form of miracles. Marcel is rather vague about miracles. The act of faith, he says, seems to involve the recognition of a religious history which, by virtue of its relation to faith, must contain some miraculous elements (JM 77-78). Any reflection on a miracle would make it contradictory, certainly from the point of view of a nihilistic historian who is concerned with interpreting and reducing such manifestations in abstracto, cut off from their living source. The problem of the miraculous element of religion will remain "insoluble" as long as any "scientistic" method of investigation is allowed to intrude in the domain of the religious and the

spiritual. True faith, however, does not need to be confirmed by miracles. Their reality, for Marcel at least, is seen as a sign of hope and the promise of fidelity. Marcel sees in miracles the dispensation of divine mercy, inconceivable in the order of pure reason (cf. EA I 28, 94; FP 94; see Chapter 3, fn 97, p. 101). In view of what he says about presence and encounter (Chapter 3, pp. 81-82), it can be said that our sense of the presence of God is born and nurtured by encounter in certain experiences. But it must be noted that others experience the same situations which for the believer may be especially significant as revelatory of the presence of God. There is nothing in any period of history that the believer can see what the unbeliever cannot.

30. FP 108-109.
31. JM 58.
32. DH 141. In this passage Marcel claims that the example of Aline Fortier's "mauvaise foi" masquerading (unconsciously perhaps) as sincerity in his play la Chapelle ardente anticipates Sartre's analyses by twenty years. La Chapelle ardente was written in 1919-1920 and published in 1931; Sartre's l'Etre et le Néant was published in 1943. For a commentary on the play see Chapter 5, p. 146 and Appendix 2, IV, p. 232. cf. SdI (l'Emissaire) 257 : (Antoine is speaking) "Sartre a raison : nous sommes cernés par la mauvaise foi. Elle est à l'origine de nos oublis chaque fois que nous avons intérêt à ne pas nous rappeler."
33. W.E. Hocking, op. cit., 225.
34. ST 253. Marcel explains : this feeling, which is basically one of satisfaction and exhilaration, stems from pride in human accomplishment, particularly in the light of man's technological advances (ST 245). It is Promethean defiance resulting from the complacent self-assurance that man can do all things and depends on none other. Marcel fears that this anthropocentric apotheosis is fostered in capitalist countries where technology is king and God is no longer needed to soothe the miseries of the unfortunate who are unfortunate because they do not enjoy the benefits of an opulent society. Certainly, the experience of suffering does not prevent faith in God : it would seem to encourage it (EA II 74, TM II 262). This reaction would be regarded cynically by the self-sufficient as a sign of some psychosomatic disorder remediable by psychoanalysis or some other technique (ST 245). The atheist, particularly when glowing with pride at man's apparent independence of any spiritual power, tends to confuse the Christian's humility in the face of his insignificance as masochism. In this connection of athéisme vécu, we may note that it is also possible for "professed" atheists to show by their actions that they do, in effect, believe. They are what Maritain calls "pseudo-atheists" (Approaches to God, 81); Blondel points out that this does not mean that all atheists are unconscious believers (La Pensée, I, 392-393). This phenomenon is not unnatural nor new. Long ago, Augustine observed that "there are many outside the Kingdom of God who appear to be inside, and many inside who appear to be outside" (De baptismo contra Donatistas, V, cxxvii, n. 38). cf. Schg 21.
35. ME II 177; 86. See Chapter 2, p. 48.
36. ST 257, 235-236, JM 33, 98. cf. J. Wisdom, Paradox and Discovery, Oxford, Blackwell, 1965, p. 14.
37. At times, Marcel concedes, atheism may be only an extreme form of anticlericalism (ST 256). While there may be hope of "readjustment" in such a brand of atheism or revolt (ST 75, 246), Marcel none the less warns against playing with fire in matters of faith and religion. It is towards this position, he fears, that some leftist Christians are veering; they see a need for a renewal of religion without which it would run the risk of becoming morally ossified. We should not, Marcel warns us, turn a blind eye to the deficiencies of an institutionalized



religion; nor should we ignore the grave imprudence of these revolutionaries (ST 242). Similarly, Marcel expresses reservations about the view that atheism is a necessary purgative of faith. He instances (ST 252) the disastrous consequences to the growing faith of some students whose teacher (an unbeliever) demolished their beliefs in order to rebuild them so as to make religion more acceptable - for an unbeliever. There is a very real danger, especially in the contemporary religious atmosphere charged with an emotional desire for instant ecumenism that those who profess to be Christians become too willing to accommodate themselves to the points of view of unbelievers. Their own integrity is as much to be respected as that of the unbelievers. It is interesting and rather indicative that atheism is not found in non-Christian cultures. We hear and read of plausible defences for "Christianity without religion" and even "Christian atheism". As Mascall warns, instead of converting the world to Christianity, we may be converting Christianity to the world (The Secularization of Christianity, London, Darton, Longman and Todd, 1965).

39. ST 235. Marcel recalls a philosopher who once told him that if God existed, he (the philosopher) would have been made aware of His existence. It was implied that it was inconceivable that God should have been hidden from an eye so penetrating as his (ME II 73; cf. EPC 189, 192). In his treatise on Opinion and Faith (EPC 185-186) Marcel states that as long as opinion remains a "seeming", not a "claiming", we can safely remain within the limits of opinion, but we cannot make an affirmation. cf. HCH 44, ME II 81. It must be pointed out, however, that opinion must involve an affirmation : how else can one express an opinion? Marcel does not show that a distinction between faith and opinion is that opinion, in its initial stages at least, is compatible with doubt whereas true faith is not. The difference between opinion and conviction in relation to faith would seem to be more one involving different states of mind than of points on a scale as Marcel suggests. Marcel's main objection to conviction is that it implies a "closed" attitude ("une sorte de clôture intérieure" - EPC 201). The hardened unbeliever's attitude is certainly closed; Marcel sees more value in grace than in reasoned arguments in his case (HV 274). Conviction implies that all possible objections are considered as having been foreseen or even simply disregarded (EPC 198, ME II 76-77). The "unshakeable" attitude of conviction may approach faith only insofar as I am obliged to account for my believing in God. Faith, as an attitude, is "open". Although one "has" certainty in faith, one is nevertheless open to further confirmation. This can be the only meaning intended by Marcel when he says, "Le seul Dieu en lequel je puisse croire est un Dieu qui accepte, dans un certain sens qui veut, qu'il soit possible de douter de lui" (PI 92, epigraph to this chapter). Marcel prefers to speak of a distinction between the certitude and a certitude. He explains : a certitude which is proclaimed passes from an act to a "having"; and what is possessed may be lost (cf. SdI [l'Emissaire] 259, "Réponse à une enquête sur l'idée de Dieu", loc. cit., 41). Certitude - the certitude - as belonging to the realm of being is so intimately involved in the knowledge and apprehension of Being as to be what Marcel calls a "concrete indubitable" subject to fusion in Being precisely because it is not possessed. A certitude bears on a problematizable content (a content which can be treated as a problem and so is liable to analysis and solution) in that it can give rise to questions for anyone in a given situation. The certitude to which I aspire would seem to be indistinguishable from its "object" and so be situated in the domain of faith (PI 93, 135; cf. DH 133).
40. EA II 54-62. Speaking for himself, Marcel claims that his faith was awakened at a time when he was in an exceptional state of moral stability and personal happiness (EA II 59).
41. See Chapter 1, p. 22.

42. F. Brentano, Psychologie vom empirischen Standpunkt (1874), vol. I, Book III, chap. 1, p. 63, and Wahrheit und Evidenz (1930), 17-18, 31-32, 87-89, 107-109, 117. Of particular interest in the present context is Brentano's observations on statements about God in the latter book, pp. 107-108.
43. That Marcel is at least familiar with this line of thought can be seen in his illustration of the impossibility of assuming the position of "normal conditions of experience" in the matter of faith. This stance, he holds, is valid only in the sphere of the objective ("extensional"). I can, he says by way of example, verify an object on the horizon which has been equally by my companion and myself as a cloud or a mountain by reference to a topographical map or a telescope. Our situations are interchangeable in this instance. But the situation is different on a spiritual plane because, as Brentano would say, it is a matter of "intentional" language. (JM 303.)
44. We can now see that Anselm's ontological argument was based on the assumption that, if God is thought about, he thereby "exists in the understanding". Anselm then proceeded to contrast the perfections of that which "exists in the understanding alone" with that which "exists in reality".
45. In terms of logic this is expressed :  $\text{Fa} \supset (\exists x) (x=a)$ .
46. See Chapter 1, pp. 27-29.
47. D.M. Baillie, in his scholarly work, Faith in God, notes (pp. 37-80) that there is no noun in the Old Testament to denote belief. Faith in God has a verbal force and implies confiding trust and activity indicative of such a notion.
48. Marcel himself dallied with a pragmatist subjectivism for which the intended "purity" of faith would in effect deny the reality of God and of religious truths. This tentative was influenced by his early view of a dichotomy between knowledge and faith.
49. PdS 263.
50. PdS 264. cf. Antoine Sorgue in l'Emissaire speaking of the difficulty in describing faith. "Seulement, il n'y a pas que ces eaux inexplorables. Il y a le monde et la lumière; et là nous ne tirons plus, c'est nous qui sommes tirés! Car ce monde est celui de la grâce; et il devient de plus en plus direct, de plus en plus consistant à mesure que nous y croyons d'avantage, et cette croyance ne peut pas être illusoire car les images qu'elle utilise, elle les brise aussitôt pour en trouver d'autres." Antoine escapes the pitfalls of Moirans by proclaiming that the multifaceted images of faith can serve only as analogues of the reality which faith tries to depict. And when Sylvie asks him if this means that he is no longer troubled by anguish, that he is now free from temptation and safe in his conviction, Antoine replies: "Oui et non, Sylvie. C'est la seule réponse là où c'est nous-mêmes qui sont en cause, nous croyons et nous ne croyons pas, nous aimons et nous n'aimons pas, nous sommes et nous ne sommes pas; mais s'il en est ainsi, c'est que nous sommes en marche vers un bout que tout ensemble nous voyons et que nous ne voyons pas" (SdI 267-268).
51. PdS 268.
52. JM 85. In repudiating the charge of fideism, Marcel declares that his philosophy is one of reflection; like Anselm, in this respect, it is fides quaerens intellectum (from a letter cited TM II 235).
53. Although he disavows both fideism and voluntarism, Marcel does not appear to have considered the question of the possible illusory activity of faith. One would expect a philosopher, especially a phenomenologist with more than a passing interest in psychism and psychology, to examine this possibility. As a phenomenologist, Marcel must be familiar with

the psychological phenomenon of the child who creates his own private world of fantasy, of how the child can cling tenaciously to his "secret". After all, Marcel himself indulged his reverie along these lines by peopling his lonely childhood with imaginary characters (PE 106, Schg 97; this was the origin of his talent for writing plays). Whether he has thought of this feature of faith can be determined by a consideration of what he has to say about faith and the intellect, and the assent of the will to faith (p. 117).

54. This is the point of Max Scheler's diagnosis of the mind as the distinguishing characteristic of the greatness of human reality. There is, however (and Marcel brings our attention to it), the snare of pantheism in this notion. Louis Lavelle has helped clarify the issue by pointing out that while it is true that the divine pierces through to created matter by the medium of the mind, mind itself is not a strictly individual property of man. It is, in Lavelle's terms, a participation in the Absolute which communicates being. It is interesting to note that Marcel's thoughts on a theory of participation touched on this same point (FP 93-114).
55. JM 46.
56. In that case, the act of faith contains another act by which thought prohibits itself from reflecting the free act. Marcel argues that such a prohibition can be justified if faith does posit transcendence in the strictest sense. And, in fact, this transcendence is the "object" of faith understood as faith in God. Between me and this transcendence, God, is the relation of one freedom to another. That relation, Marcel concludes, is involved in the Act of Faith - as affirmation (JM 57-58). cf. FP 111.
57. L.A. Blain, "Marcel's Logic in Proving the Existence of God" in the International Philosophical Quarterly, IX, p. 204. The consent of the whole person is what Newman calls "illative consent" (A Grammar of Assent, New York, Longmans Green, 1947, ch. VIII, p. 252, ch. IX, p. 274). cf. FP 93 : "La foi en un certain sens est plus qu'un acte immanent puisqu'elle est l'achèvement d'une dialectique tout entière orientée vers la transcendence." It would appear, then, that Marcel does not admit the possibility of faith creating its own object, if faith is a fusion of will and intellect, supported by evidence of the reality of a transcendent "object". It is for the reason just stated that Marcel criticizes the classical proofs : they have value only after the event for they serve as confirmation to the intellect of its choice.
58. JM 58.
59. In an exercise in linguistic analysis Marcel observes that the word "believe" has vague connotations : it may be taken to mean nothing more than to "presume" or even to "seem". To clarify the existential significance of the "open" aspect of faith, he recalls the idea of "opening credit", which involves a pledge and, since one's whole being is concerned, this pledge affects not only what I have but also what I am (EPC 201, ME II 78-80). cf. p. 110.
60. PI 9.
61. JM 198. cf. PI 92 (epigraph to this chapter, p. 103).
62. JM 228. cf. HdD 199, RPR 39, 49, 64.
63. JM 198. cf. JM 282 (see Chapter 2, fn 80, p. 70).
64. ST 248. cf. EPC 265.
65. Briefly, Marcel's argument against theodicy is as follows. God is a mystery inasmuch as any attempt to demonstrate him objectively would, ipso facto, reduce him to an object. Just as we cannot put ourselves in anybody's place (CM 49), still less can we dare presume to put ourselves in God's place. God cannot be judged -even from the best of

intentions; and theodicy (ΘΕΟΣ - ΔΥΜΗ) amounts to a judgment on God. In this attitude Marcel finds confirmation in Royce who holds that as soon as God is regarded as a power, he is either imperfect or accountable (MR 16, 26, 98). Marcel goes further to repudiate theodicy as a form of atheism, just as atheism is "theodicy gone wrong" (JM 65, 232, EA I 101, ME II 177, Paix sur la terre [Un Juste] 115). Theology, Marcel warns, must take care not to turn the reality of evil and suffering into an "effigie abstraite", for that would serve only to reinforce atheism (ST 248).

66. EPC 108. cf. HCH 69, ST 205.
67. cf. PACMO 58. The way to tackle the "problem" of evil and suffering is not to withdraw into oneself (e.g. Laurent Chesnay in le Monde cassé and Vernoy in la Fin des temps) but to open oneself to a communion more vast, perhaps infinite, so that the evil becomes our evil. This infinite communion is what the Church calls the Mystical Body. The archetypal witness to whom we have recourse as having triumphed over evil by becoming incarnate, like us, is God in the person of Christ : he is our "Thou" (ST 211). cf. St Paul, Philippians 2: 6-7, 2 Cor. 5: 21.
68. Marcel identifies the double temptation to which we are exposed as despair and manicheism. Despair would appear to be the result of an acknowledgment of the meaninglessness of life and would in turn promote suicide as a solution. Manicheism, Marcel warns, is still as active today as it was in the time of Augustine. Today's practical manicheism of a technical age demands a dualism between the forces of good and evil. Marcel claims that he is not concerned with the theological attitude which was condemned as heresy, but with manicheism from a purely philosophical point of view. Insofar as it is a metaphysical doctrine, he explains, manicheism implies a failure to recognize or interpret properly the nature of human experience at its heights (ST 195, 198, 207-209, 211-212, MR 106).
69. EPC 119 (in which case life is meaningless and existence is absurd).
70. JM 198.
71. For once Marcel does not follow Augustine; he fears that, in answer to the notion of a predestined selection by God at the heart of the mystery of evil, the non-privileged would object (ST 210). cf. fn 23.
72. DH 142. cf. Schg 111 where Marcel claims that to appreciate suffering, one must have already experienced it. For examples from Marcel's theatre of different reactions to suffering, see Appendix 2, IV.
73. cf. JM 160-161 : "Il n'y a donc de mystère possible que dans l'ordre du toi" (Jan. 1919). Later (1923 and again in 1925), he expressed himself to be not so sure of the validity of this reasoning, but insofar as it affects suffering, we could (he says) say that it is still valid. We may infer, then, that "genuine" existents see in these trials an appeal to share in the sufferings of God who, in the Incarnation, took on our human condition. Marcel quotes with approval Royce's encouragement : "To Job's lamentations we should reply : God in his ultimate essence is not a being other than yourself. He is Absolute Being. You are one with him. You are a part of his life. He is the soul of your soul. And here is the first truth : when you suffer, your sufferings are the sufferings of God, not God's work which is exterior to him, not punishment inflicted by him from outside, not the fruit of his negligence, but his own personal woe" (J. Royce, Studies of Good and Evil, 14, cited MR 99-100).
74. ST 212-213.
75. ST 193.
76. PACMO 58 : "Mais le mal purement constaté ou contemplé cesse d'être le mal souffert : tout simplement il cesse d'être le mal." What Marcel is trying to stress is that we should not look upon evil as an academic

- question which a psychoanalyst could ascribe to a defective functioning or a bad adaptation to a traumatic experience - especially since this could be given as a "scientistic" explanation of sin (ST 204-205) cf. EA I 125, 216. The question "Why is there evil?" has, for Marcel, no possibility of an answer unless the questioner himself is involved. The individual recognizes the evil in himself only when he stops trying to explain it and recognizes that the evil is not only before him but within him (PI 176, HCH 95).
77. See above, fn 74. cf. le Dard 118. If anything, Marcel's position on evil is aligned with that of the "Irenaicist school" of theodicy as explained by John Hick in Evil and the God of Love (London, Macmillan, 1966). According to this "school", there is a distinction between the "image" and "likeness" of God after which created man is patterned. Man is first made in the "image" of God as a personal being who can be brought by his own free responses to his human condition towards the "likeness" of God which is his final perfecting by the Holy Spirit. Man, therefore, is created with the potentiality of perfection yet to be realized. (We recall Keats's expression that this world is a "vale of soul-making", quoted by Marcel, EA II 44; see Chapter 2, p. 45). Evil, inevitably present in a "partially disorganized world" (cf. Teilhard de Chardin, le Milieu divin, 1957, pp. 89-90), is justified only as a means through which God wills us to achieve the moral maturity which will fit us for eternal happiness. For objections to Irenaean theodicy, see Clement Dore, "God, 'Soul-Making' and Apparently Useless Suffering" in The American Philosophical Quarterly, vol. 7 (1970), No. 2, pp. 119-130. For interesting statements by characters in Marcel's plays, cf. Arnaud Chartrain in les Coeurs avides (135) - text given in Appendix 2, IV, p. 233, and Claude Lemoyne, referring to his pardon of Edmée: "(J'ai prié) pour nous deux que Dieu me donnât la force de t'être secourable, et petit à petit j'ai eu comme le sentiment que ma souffrance tendait à se changer en une force vivante et efficace" (HdD 55).
78. ST 265. cf. EA I 25: "Je songeais aussi que la crédibilité est absolument démontrée par un fait comme la conversion d'un Claudel, d'un Maritain, etc. Il est absolument incontestable qu'on peut croire à ces événements. Or, personne ne peut admettre que c'est faute d'information suffisante qu'ils ont cru. Il faut alors, prenant cette croyance comme base, se demander à quelles conditions elle est possible, remonter du fait à ses conditions. Pente véritable, unique, de la réflexion religieuse."
79. Le Seuil invisible (la Grâce) 207-208. Commenting on this passage, Marcel says (DH 48-49) that Olivier sums up in a few words what Marcel himself had been trying to develop along the lines of Participation. cf. FP 93, 95, JM 7, 73-74, EA I 42-43. Gérard's "God is free!" put him beyond the world of mere thinking. The dialogue between Olivier and Gérard transposes to the human level, in a context that can already be called existential, the sort of hesitation which Marcel's philosophical writings then showed (on his own admission).
80. HdD 68-69.
81. RPR 44, 52.
82. Paix sur la terre 117.
83. SdI 24.
84. SdI 326.
85. The "recuperative" dimension of reflection is shown up negatively, that is by its absence, also in Marcel's second published play, le Palais de sable, in which Moirans is in a position somewhat similar to that of Laurence. In le Palais de sable reflection remains at the primary (i.e. critical) level. Moirans is brought to realize that faith for him was a possession to be enjoyed for its aesthetic beauty and its

social utility. But when Clarisse decides to live her faith more fully, he understands with a shock that true faith is a very different matter. The stage is set for his conversion (as it was for Antoine Sorgue who reacted "positively" in l'Emissaire) but Moirans is still too self-possessed and indisponible to make use of the corrective influence of secondary reflection. He resorts to spiritual blackmail for his own ends, destroys Clarisse's faith and causes the atrophy of his own. Secondary reflection, Marcel reminds us, is not faith but can be useful in preparing or fostering the spiritual setting of faith (ME II 67, see Chapter 3, p. 79). According to Marcel, secondary reflection shows that keeping faith within the limits of the cogito would denature faith by trying to make it verifiable. This is what he means by his distinction between je pense and je crois (see p. 110). Inasmuch as genuine faith cannot be dissociated from Him whom it affirms, the "I think" cannot metamorphose itself, by its own power, into "I believe". It is when the "I think" reflects upon itself that it realizes the need to postulate an act which would transcend (primary) reflection, and this act is one of grace. (But see the criticism of this assertion, p. 110.) Genuine faith, therefore, is characterized by an inner need, which is that of being. Such is the nature of the intervention of grace, as proposed by Marcel. All the time he insists that we remain free, and the act of faith must be a correspondingly free act answering the invitation so that, by positing itself, it abolishes the dualism established by the primary "objectifying" reflection between faith and the thought of faith.

86. ME II 180.
87. P. Tillich, The Courage to Be. cf. EA I 55, 66, see Chapter 4, p.125.
88. FP 94. Faith effects a transformation of the believer into a new mode of being which necessitates a renewed Weltanschauung since it is a personal experience. This is also the spiritual experience of the Absolute Thou as experienced at the heart of all other "thous". Faith gives fresh meaning to the world, life and existence. Faith is a means of recovering, at a higher degree, existential immediacy. It is the grasp on being which is life and spiritual creation.
89. cf. EA I 28 (see Chapter 1, fn 37, p. 33). Marcel considers (JM 305) that his investigations into the relationship between the self and the body can serve as a useful comparison with faith. Despite his assertion that the world only exists inasmuch as I act on it - for there is action only inasmuch as "je suis mon corps et cesse de le penser" - this seems to be a very dubious analogy. For one thing, the self cannot really be considered without a body; the notion of a disembodied self would be dismissed as irrational by some contemporary thinkers. Marcel asks, "La croyance n'est-elle pas toujours l'acte par lequel, enjambant en quelque sorte une des séries continues qui relient mon expérience immédiate à un fait quelconque, je traite ce fait comme s'il m'était donné à la façon dont l'est mon propre corps." He hastens to agree that one's body is not an object of belief. "Toute croyance", he remarks enigmatically, "se construit sur le modèle de ce qui n'est pas par soi-même une croyance." Marcel argues that there is a very close liaison between existence and sensation. The individual "adheres" (belongs?) to his body as he "adheres" to matter through sensation. The individual can also "adhere" to the "toi" of others through love, and also to the Absolute Thou in (super) natural progression through faith and love, and he "adheres" to himself through love. This total "adhesion" is then what constitutes an individual's existence and at the same time denotes his active being without which any of these component parts would be inauthentic. However, for all that abstruse reasoning it seems that Marcel is attempting an unwarranted "leap" from a theory of participation through corporeal sensation by means of "existential" analogy to a consideration of the nature of belief involving incorporeal, transcendent Being. The fundamental datum of all metaphysical reflection, in Marcel's view, is that I am a being who is not transparent to myself, whose being is a mystery. He concludes his

- Journal métaphysique by stating the need to recognize clearly the transition from existence from presence (a more intelligible analogy which he comes to use; see Chapter 3, pp. 81-83, 91-92); he wonders if it is not by presence that one can effect the transition from existence to value : "Ce qui a de valeur, n'est-ce pas ce qui accroît en nous le sentiment de la présence (qu'on dise qu'il s'agit de la nôtre ou de celle de l'univers - cela n'importe pas). Il y a dans ces réflexions ceci d'essentiel qu'elles semblent rendre possible un passage de la métaphysique à l'éthique" (JM 306).
90. FP 97.
  91. FP 99.
  92. cf. JM 217-218, 63.
  93. JM 279, 281-282, 288, 257.
  94. EPC 60-61, JM 169, "Theism and Personal Relationships", loc. cit., 40-41. cf. J. Hick, Faith and Knowledge (1957), p. 132 on the notion of faith as the condition antecedent of the religious experience which is faith-knowledge of God. "There is in cognition of every kind an unresolved mystery. The knower-known relationship is in the last analysis sui generis : the mystery of cognition persists at the end of every enquiry - though its persistence does not prevent us from cognizing - we cannot explain how we know ourselves to be responsible beings subject to moral obligations; we just find ourselves interpreting our social experience in this way ... The same is true of the apprehension of God. The theistic believer cannot explain how he knows the divine presence to be mediated through his human experience. He just finds himself interpreting his experience in this way. He lives in the presence of God, though he is unable to prove by any dialectical process that God exists."
  95. ME II 100-101, JM 87-89, 157-159, 258.
  96. JM 89-90. cf. EA I 92.
  97. FP 90. cf. JM 169, 220, 287-288, EA I 37, EPC 54-55, HP 65, ME II 101-105.
  98. TM II 322.
  99. ME II 97.
  100. CM 194-195. cf. (i) Antoine Sorgue in l'Emissaire (SdI 239) : "Tout ce qui était permis pendant ces affreuses années [1940-1944] à des hommes lucides et soucieux de le rester, c'était d'abord de garder leur jugement intact et de secourir des malheureux chaque fois qu'ils pouvaient - Et aussi, et surtout, de prier." (ii) Werner Schnee's parting advice to Béatrice Soreau in le Dard (117-118) : "Vous ne pouvez pas l'abandonner [referring to her husband, Eustache]. Il faut vous rappeler toujours que vous êtes la femme d'un pauvre ... il ne guérira sans doute jamais de sa pauvreté. C'est le plus grand mal de notre temps, il se répand comme une peste; on n'a pas encore trouvé de médecin pour le soigner. On ne sait même pas le reconnaître. L'artiste y échappera sans doute, même s'il ne mange pas à sa faim. Et aussi le fidèle qui a la prière. Tous les autres sont menacés."
  101. JM 219.
  102. *ibid.* cf. PACMO 82.
  103. Marcel relates (EPC 220) how much he was impressed by a passage from E.M. Forster which enlightened him on this cardinal matter : "It is private life which holds out the mirror to infinity; personal intercourse, and that alone, that ever hints at a personality beyond our daily vision." Marcel used this text from Howard's End as his epigraph to the second part of his Journal (JM 127).
  104. EA I 51, 73.

105. EA I 66. Marcel once defined metaphysics as the logic of freedom. He recognizes that such a definition is not flawless but argues that it serves to throw light on the essential truth that metaphysical progress consists in the overall spectrum of the successive steps by which a freedom (which understands itself first as the simple power of yes and no) is constituted as a real power by conferring upon itself a content in which it is discovered and recognized. Such a philosophy of freedom, Marcel claims, cannot be thought to be in opposition to the philosophy of being (EPC 45).
106. "Réponse à une enquête sur l'idée de Dieu", loc. cit., 39. see Chapter 2, p. 43. In this sense we can appreciate Marcel's affinity with Augustine and Anselm : that through the creative fidelity of faith our souls are restless until they rest in God, and that faith, on the philosophical level, is essentially fides quaerens intellectum. cf. Chapter 3, fn 1, p. 94, Chapter 4 fn 52, p. 132, Appendix 1 B, p. 216.
107. JM 137.
108. The role of religion in such a metaphysics as envisaged by Marcel can be understood, he says, as playing an important "parenetic" (exhortatory) part. The metaphysician, according to Marcel, has a mission - not as a "man of congresses" seeking fame and adulation - as a persuader, in exhorting his fellow men to take a more active part in the fellowship of being through creative testimony of fidelity, hope and love. (We may be tempted to detect an element of elitism in this claim of a "parenetic" mission.) Faith, for Marcel, must be a loving witness if it is to be authentic. The "true" nature of religion in this exhortatory sense occurred to him as far back as 1912 when he wrote : "La religion n'est qu'à condition qu'on ferme les yeux à tout ce qui se passe empiriquement comme religion. Nous devons donc nous en tenir à l'idée que la métaphysique est bien en dernière analyse une parénétique transcendante se fondant sur une critique" (FP 73). The structure of this "transcendent exhortation" (i.e. presumably oriented towards the Transcendent) is not, he assures us, to be taken as a deductive process, for religion is not and cannot be contained only in ideas. The dialectic reveals that the affirmation of the contingency of one's relation with the empirical denies freedom. Instead, it shows the way to real freedom and individuality. It can, therefore, be called a logic of freedom (see above, fn 105) : "l'ensemble des démarches par lesquelles une pensée en général se constitue comme individuelle" (FP 74-75). This "transcendent parenetic" can be seen to be the driving impulse of secondary reflection which is also established on preliminary critical reflection, towards awareness of the ontological need which in turn helps reveal to us the reality of the Mystery of Being, which is God.
109. PACMO 77-78, 80.
110. EA II 73.
111. ST 61, PE 92-93.
112. EA I 138, 185, ME II 132. This will lead to a distinction between the attitudes of the suicide and the martyr (Chapter 6, pp. 186-188).
113. EA II 118-119.
114. ST 211. cf. ME II 133.



## CHAPTER FIVE

ATTESTATION

## Creative Fidelity in Hope and Love

Therefore, since we are judged righteous by faith, we are at peace with God, through our Lord Jesus Christ. Through him we have entered this state of grace and we rejoice in our hope of sharing the glory of God. More than that, we rejoice in our sufferings, knowing that these sufferings bring patience, and patience brings perseverance, and perseverance brings hope, and this hope is not deceptive, because this love of God has been poured into our hearts by the Holy Spirit who has been given to us.

- SAINT PAUL, Romans, 5 : 1-5.

Vivre dans la lumière de la fidélité,  
c'est progresser dans une direction  
qui est celle même de l'Etre.

- G. MARCEL, La Dignité humaine, 93.

By now it is clear that Gabriel Marcel's whole dialectic is oriented towards the possibility of arriving at an experiential knowledge of the Absolute who is seen as the goal of an innate human impulse (the ontological need). Marcel agrees with Sartre that man's ultimate fulfilment of self is situated in his own "project"; Marcel urges that this existential "project" can be sublimated through attachment to the transcendent. He proposes to show that it is by commitment to others and fundamentally by commitment in a transcendent dimension to the Absolute (personalized as Thou) that man can achieve his personal "project". It is, he asserts, in our relationships with our fellow-beings that the seeds of the promise of fulfilment, of pleroma<sup>1</sup>, are sown insofar as these relationships are shown to be the vehicle and mirror of our relations to the Transcendent. It is, then, by virtue of relationships that man witnesses to his "authentic project" of knowing and fulfilling himself. The genuine existent, Marcel insists, must witness to being, that is to the fact that not only he is but that his status is that of creature who depends on a Creator for the gift of his being.

In this chapter we shall be considering Marcel's presentation of the means by which man can (and must) witness to being. In order to create an awareness of man's ontological orientation - that man is directed towards God "in whom we live and move and have our being"<sup>2</sup> - Marcel has recourse to analyses of experience since man is basically, from even a biological point of view, a sentient being. I propose to give examples from Marcel's plays to illustrate his phenomenological studies of experience, in the context of his "concrete" approaches. For, to pursue his aim of restoring to experience its ontological weight in a manner intelligible to all, Marcel has had to move from idealism to realism, from the abstract to the concrete. He maintains that the concrete can never be completely objectified because it is inexhaustible<sup>3</sup>, as Being itself is inexhaustible. His favourite concrete approaches to the inexhaustible mystery of Being are the human yet supra-sensual experiences of fidelity, hope and love. It can be stated that Marcel's dialectic of these concrete approaches as the means of ontological attestation is a translation into metaphysical language of the "evangelical counsels" to practise the three main theological virtues of faith, hope and charity.

Prominence will be given to Marcel's treatment of hope, a virtue which he claims has been largely neglected by contemporary thinkers. Certainly its significance seems to have been minimized by the Anglo-Saxon schools of philosophy. As will be noted, Marcel shares with Sartre, for different reasons, an appreciation of the importance of hope.

At the core of these interrelated experiences (fidelity, hope and love) is the creative presence of the fellowship of Being. This creative

presence is the permeating spirit of Marcel's philosophy and is established in the Absolute Thou as source of being. These interrelated experiential approaches are the concrete manifestations of witness whereby the authentic participant attests the foundation of the self in an ontological communion which is itself established in Being. Once the existent realizes that his being is oriented towards transcendence, he becomes aware that the transcendental presence which illuminates his whole being and the meaningful purpose of his existence is no less than the Presence of God. According to Marcel, presence at any level cannot be grasped but is evoked through direct and unchallengeable experiences which do not rise from the conceptual apparatus of which we make use in order to reach objects.<sup>4</sup> These experiences, which are given to us all by reason of our situation in the world, are deepened according to the degrees of intimacy with our own selves and with our fellow travellers through life. To be fruitful, presence depends, Marcel claims, on one's willingness to make oneself available, to be spent in a loving, selfless union with the other. And that is the quintessence of fidelity.

## I. Fidelity as Witness.

### i. Establishing the quality of commitment

Fidelity, Marcel proclaims, presupposes commitment because one must initially be faithful to one's own commitment.<sup>5</sup> Fidelity is a response in commitment to an appeal; it is not a mere act of the will or a desire to hold on to a possession. In this light we can distinguish between fidelity and constancy. Constancy, Marcel says, is characterized by an idea, more or less evidently self-centred, of immutability in attitude. Fidelity interpreted as constancy would be too passive and stagnant for Marcel, and certainly reducible to a version of being faithful to oneself only.<sup>6</sup> The other would be seen only as a useful specimen on which to practise an assumed virtue. This would not be true fidelity according to Marcel's underlying notion of participation since the relationship is not properly dyadic : the other is treated as a third party. Presence would be missing or at most conceived only as an idea. If presence were only an idea, we are assured, the most we could intend to do would be to maintain this idea before us as one keeps a photograph on a mantelpiece or in a cupboard. It is, however, of the nature of presence to be uncircumscribed since it lies beyond the zone of the problematical. Presence, Marcel insists, is mystery in the exact measure in which it is presence, that is to say insofar as it is understood as Marcel himself understands the term. Fidelity is basically the perpetuation of intersubjective presence and as such is also

"mysterious" inasmuch as it is closely involved in the being we ourselves are.<sup>7</sup>

ii. Fidelity is creative

(a) Fidelity to self.

Fidelity to oneself, Marcel warns, is both difficult to achieve and to discern. Self-fidelity may be nothing more than a stubbornly maintained agreement between the self and certain impressions, ideas or ways of living which the person has labelled as his own. Although it is personal, such a view of fidelity is false because it is self-centred; it belongs to the order of "having" and serves only to strengthen the obduracy of one's in-disponibilité. True fidelity, Marcel stipulates, is intersubjective; it is humble and patient. All three virtues - patience, humility and fidelity - form as it were a "community"

qui m'apparaît comme un être dont il n'appartient pas à  
la psychologie de reconnaître la mouvante structure;

this "community"

ne saurait exister, ne se laisse même pas penser dans un  
système qui concentrerait en moi les racines, et comme  
les attaches réelles - des engagements que la vie peut  
m'inciter à souscrire. (8)

As for the fixed element of constancy, true fidelity on the other hand is active and spontaneous. This element of spontaneity is in itself radically independent of the will. Fidelity is by no means an inert conformism, an inward resolution to preserve the status quo. Understood more positively, Marcel suggests, fidelity is the active recognition of something permanent in the ontological order which can be ignored or betrayed just as it can be attested or safeguarded.<sup>9</sup> This "something permanent" in the ontological order can be only taken to mean God, as we shall proceed to see in the following section. Fidelity is creative of the person, Marcel argues, because it possesses the mysterious power of renewing both donor and recipient, no matter how unworthy the latter may have been at first : it gives him the chance to open himself in communion to that spirit which animates the consecrated soul. True fidelity can only be creative fidelity which safeguards itself by creating; its true nature is revealed as evidence, an attestation.<sup>10</sup>

(b) Fidelity to God.

Underpinning any fidelity is absolute fidelity by which Marcel means fidelity to the Absolute (Thou). Such fidelity is indeed humble and patient. Fidelity centred on God (and this is what Marcel implies) is the

humble, active confidence in Him, for of myself I can do nothing. To assume that I can be faithful to myself without reference to God is to offend against the first commandment by claiming aseity. Fidelity is also patient because its dependence on God is such that it makes no demands for instant recognition of its faithful services. At the same time absolute fidelity is implied as being reciprocal : the Absolute Thou is invoked as Absolute Recourse who will never betray one's trust. At the root of fidelity, Marcel asserts, there is a "grasp" of Being upon us, a total demand of an absolute Presence who is given to us as Absolute Thou. From this premiss - surely presupposing faith - we can understand how Marcel reasons that, deriving from Absolute Fidelity, other fidelities become possible, finding in it their guarantee.<sup>11</sup>

Fidelity is, accordingly, attestation to Being. "Fidelity to being" must then find its ultimate expression as fidelity to God because an appeal of a genuine ontological order can only come from a "thou", so that the absolute appeal must emanate from an Absolute Thou. At least this is what we must infer unless Marcel is to proclaim an unverifiable and unfalsifiable "one-way" appeal addressed to the Absolute Thou. It is a point that he does not make clear : Marcel does not enunciate categorically the reciprocal activity of the Absolute Thou.<sup>12</sup> If we do accept God as the source of the absolute appeal, fidelity bears witness to God, acknowledging his absolute Presence. We can now see the very close connection between faith and fidelity in their highest expression. For, as Marcel observes, in the end there must be an absolute commitment, entered upon by the whole of my being, or at least by something real in myself which could not be repudiated without repudiating the whole - and which would be addressed to the whole of Being and be made in the presence of that whole. Such an absolute commitment, Marcel declares flatly, is faith.<sup>13</sup> Now since Marcel points out that faith means "faith in God"<sup>14</sup>, the "whole of Being" must be taken to mean God. While Marcel may not proclaim that identification in specific terms, he certainly admits the close connection between faith and fidelity :

En simplifiant beaucoup, mais sans, je crois, fausser l'essentiel, je dirai d'une part que la foi s'est éclairée pour moi à partir du moment où j'ai pensé directement la fidélité; et d'autre part, que la fidélité s'est éclairée à mes yeux à partir du toi, à partir de la présence elle-même interprétée en fonction du toi. (15)

In fact, Marcel does identify the repository of absolute fidelity as God and, furthermore, a personal God so that, in the light of his comments on absolute commitment, we can only infer that God is Being :

Une fidélité absolue enveloppe une personne absolue. (16)

Une fidélité absolue, vouée ... non point à un être particulier, à une créature, mais à Dieu lui-même. (17)

(c) Human fidelity mirrors the divine.

Genuine commitment may be said to be never unilateral. Of course it may at once be objected that this cannot be a factual statement since it is not an empirical matter. A may be committed to B, and B to A. Now if B becomes unfaithful, A is not necessarily unfaithful. A, then, can remain faithful while B is not. This situation is easily shown in human relationships and can be applied to the relationships between man and God (God remaining faithful). Again, it may be possible for people to be committed to an idea, even if that idea is unreal (e.g. the extirpation of witchcraft or a Marxist class-less society). To the objection that my fidelity to another person can be reduced to an idea which I have formed of him, an idea which is really a projection of myself, Marcel replies that such an opinion has been arrived at a priori and is disproved by experience. But Marcel's latter claim is a dangerous one and certainly appears to be fallible. It all depends, apparently, on his interpretation of fidelity. In his view, fidelity is rather like an oath, a vow never to forsake the other, and accordingly implies the consciousness of something sacred.<sup>18</sup> From this very personal opinion Marcel may well proceed to show that marriage is an apt illustration of fidelity to commitment on the level of human relationships.<sup>19</sup> But marriage is by no means universally seen in this light, and his continuing argument is accordingly weakened.

To show that true fidelity is creative Marcel uses the analogy of the creativity of human fatherhood. A desirable awareness of its potential in improving interpersonal relationships and also of recognizing the "sacral" character of life (which is what he means by "piety" in this context) can be aided, he suggests, by a consideration of the revealed dogma of the Trinity seen in the unfathomable wealth of its concrete manifestations.<sup>20</sup> Human fatherhood, he goes on to say, should be conceived as the model of divine fatherhood and not conversely.<sup>21</sup> It is through procreation, with an awareness of its "true" purpose, that man can share in the creativity of God. Such is the particular vocation of fatherhood, a vocation which itself presupposes regard for life and fosters the recognition of man's ontological status as creature.

(The vocation of fatherhood) includes the corollary (of which we are perhaps all too unaware) that the words "to impart life" have to be interpreted in their truest sense, namely, that life is an infinitely precious gift, and that the father himself is only a mediator between God as the author of all creation and the child as a creature of God. (22)

(d) Self-fulfilment through appeal to the Absolute Thou.

It is by means of what Marcel calls the vœu créateur that we enter into this commitment which is not necessarily nor solely restricted to

fatherhood. The voeu créateur is by no means unconditional but on the contrary is formulated rather as a prayer in which I beg God as Absolute Thou to accept my life in order to know and love him and thereby ensure my salvation.<sup>23</sup> It is, as Marcel recognizes, defined in relation to an organism which, while spiritual, is yet carnally established in the eternity of God, insofar as fidelity is embodied :

une fidélité elle-même créatrice, la fidélité à une  
espérance qui va au-delà de toute ambition, de toute  
prétention personnelle. (24)

Fidelity thus expressed gives meaning to life and existence. For this voeu créateur - the concrete expression of any true fidelity - is the "quivering anticipation" of a pleromatic self-fulfilment in which life, no longer an endless improvisation of disappointing variations on a few given themes, will be satisfied, concentrated and reassembled around the Absolute Person who alone can give it the unbreakable seal of unity.<sup>25</sup>

Fidelity cannot, being mystery, be appreciated from outside. Now while, theoretically in order to commit myself, I should first know myself, in fact I come to know myself only if I have first made my act of commitment.<sup>26</sup> Through my absolute fidelity to God as Being I come to know myself and so find the answer to the primary ontological question "What am I?" Fidelity is established on a certain relationship between myself and Being which is experienced and as such is indefectible. From this realization flows my confidence. This is a resumption of the "primitive assurance" of being which gives impetus to the ontological need. And as Being cannot be an abstraction, absolute fidelity transcended involves an Absolute Person. Ontological fidelity, Marcel states firmly, can only be shown to a person and never to an ideal or a notion.<sup>27</sup> If it were, fidelity would be degraded into an objectifiable idea. Now as we can love and be faithful only to one whom we know, our fidelity - at its most creative and absolute - cannot be vested in another whom we do not know, but in one who is for us a thou. This, then, is the Absolute Thou by whom Marcel must mean God.

### iii. Concrete examples from Marcel's theatre

Despite his debt to Bergson who was his teacher, Marcel seems to owe any inspiration for his notion of fidélité créatrice more to Josiah Royce's philosophy of loyalty than to Bergson's évolution créatrice. Marcel, however, directs his investigations into an experiential thought instead of the empirical. Since the notion of fidelity plays "un rôle axial" in his whole work<sup>28</sup>, it is interesting to note the development of his thought along this line by comparing and contrasting the plays written before and after his conversion.

Fidelity, being the perpetuation and attestation of presence, is preserved in creativity which in turn is to be found wherever there is being. Now being is fostered and developed in communion with oneself and others, and derives from God as Source of all being. At each level there is interaction which can be expressed negatively by rejection and isolation, positively by response and intersubjectivity. At the highest level fidelity to God means to have faith in God. Faith in God is, of course, a free act and as such does not have to be imposed on him who is unwilling. But it does not follow that faith in God cannot be attested. The witness of faith in God is borne by the human activity of fidelity.<sup>29</sup>

Two of Marcel's earlier plays, la Chapelle ardente and l'Iconoclaste (he significantly describes the latter play as "la tragédie de la fidélité"<sup>30</sup>), reveal the possibility of a mistaken sense of fidelity to a person. In each case the person is dead - a man in the first, a woman in the second. Each play shows that what was the cause of the tragedy was the lack of openness on the part of those concerned to others similarly affected by the absence. Therein lies the reason : the person to whom the "fidelity" is attested is treated objectively, as an absence, and not "mysteriously", as presence.

(a) La Chapelle ardente.

Aline Fortier jealously keeps the memory of her son Raymond killed in the last days of the Great War as more than just a photograph on the mantelpiece. (An indication of the extent of her blinded grief is her refusal to allow her grandchildren the use of Raymond's childhood toys.) Aline's agony is self-inflicted and self-centred : she identifies herself with her deceased son, unconsciously belittling his character. Her "fidelity" is nothing more than an egoistic love of self, as her husband recognizes. He accuses her of thriving on misery and sorrow (she visits only those families who have suffered like losses, relishing their admiration). Don't pretend that you are doing all this for Raymond, Octave tells her, it is for yourself. Determined to keep things as they were when Raymond was alive, Aline succeeds in discouraging his bereaved fiancée, Mireille, from marrying according to her desire. Instead Aline urges Mireille to offer her own sacrifice as befitting the memory of the departed Raymond by marrying the sickly André Verdet. Even when Mireille eventually sees through her "mother-in-law's" machinations, Aline still contrives to retain her hold over the unfortunate girl who is of sufficiently good heart to recognize that Aline is not to be hated but pitied.<sup>31</sup> Aline's tragedy springs from the fact that she loved her son too much not to see the rights of others. She is unable to open herself to others, unable to recognize their equal right to live and love as they wish.



(b) L'Iconoclaste.

Similarly mistaken is Abel Renaudier who identifies himself with Viviane, the dead wife of his friend, Jacques Delorme. Abel had passionately loved Viviane but when she had preferred Jacques he had respected her choice, accepting his friend as the more deserving of her hand. Jacques's subsequent remarriage appeared to Abel as a betrayal of Viviane's memory. As a result of his crusade to avenge her, Abel succeeds in demolishing Jacques's very fidelity to his dead wife. For Jacques had been on the verge of a suicidal despair when, after a psychic experience, he had remarried at the behest of the spirit (as he believed it to be) of Viviane. Abel, of course, had been unaware of the state of his friend's mind. Although Jacques's notion of fidelity is vitiated by objectivity, Abel's is no less. Abel, the iconoclast, is at fault because he, too, objectifies fidelity as much as Jacques who wants tangible evidence. What Abel should have done was to treat Jacques as a thou (just as Aline should have respected Mireille) to show his confidence in him, by opening in his favour "le crédit illimité que s'ouvrent l'un à l'autre des amis véritables."<sup>32</sup>

There is, however, no commitment purely from one side. It always implies that the other being has a hold over me<sup>33</sup> if my fidelity is inspired by the sense of an intersubjective presence. This sense is awakened and fostered by the conditional antecedent of availability, as exemplified in Mon Temps n'est pas le vôtre. This play serves as the bridge between the two groups; the heroine, Marie-Henriette Champel, changes her outlook towards her father from indifference to authentic fidelity.

(c) Mon Temps n'est pas le vôtre.

In this play which treats of the "generation gap", Alfred Champel can no longer communicate with his "modern, liberal-minded" wife and still less with his two daughters of relaxed morality, Marie-Henriette and Perrine. Whereas the latter remains obdurate, indifferent to his feelings as to anybody's, Marie-Henriette changes in attitude towards her father after a real "open" encounter with him shortly before his death which is occasioned by Perrine's outrageous contempt. Thereafter Marie-Henriette remains faithful to his presence and can appreciate Flavio's affirmation that grace is the medium for fidelity to the dead.<sup>34</sup>

The outcome of this play prepares us for the proposition that there can be self-creation, and a corresponding fidelity to self, only insofar as one is prepared to open oneself to others. This is illustrated in two of Marcel's later plays, le Dard and le Signe de la Croix (both of which, coincidentally, have the "Jewish problem" of the Nazi era as common denominator).

(d) Le Signe de la Croix.

The theme of this play is the fruition of faith through the awareness of a transcendental reality affirmed by personal witness. Simon Bernauer has taken his family to the South of France hopefully out of the reach of the Gestapo, for they are of Jewish origin. Their danger is heightened with the news of the arrest and presumed death of Simon's eldest son, David, who had remained in Paris. For Simon, this event, stemming from David's public wearing of the Star of David, is a turning-point in his attitude to Judaism. Hitherto he had not cared to recognize his affiliations with the French Jewish community and now regrets his earlier disparaging treatment of David's religious consciousness.<sup>35</sup> Simon's openness to the enlightenment of the course of his duty is due to his predisposition to the influence of Madame Lilienthal (Tante Léna). The epitome of tolerance and selfless consideration for others, she accepts with serene resignation the failure of the abbé Schweigsam's efforts to obtain sanctuary for her; she belongs already, she affirms, to "another kingdom".<sup>36</sup>

Like Nicodemus, Simon comes by night - to the abbé and reveals that he has made his decision. Whereas before he would have avoided contact with his fellow Jews, he cannot turn his back on them now that they are persecuted but must share their plight as one shares the blessed bread. This revelation he owes to Aunt Léna. He sees her as having been sent like an angel, bearing a message of which she herself is unaware since she urges him to leave for America with the rest of his family. In awe at this mysterious appeal, he asks if it is not his right to think that she has been sent to enlighten his way. After all,

Pourquoi certains êtres ne seraient-ils pas placés sur  
notre chemin comme des lumières? (37)

As far as he is concerned, his way is clear. Since David's death cannot be simply "wiped away" into forgetfulness, he can at least give himself as an oblation, to unite himself in solidarity with his fellow suffering Jews. When Aunt Léna wonders if he is acting in this way because he sees a light which she cannot, Simon replies tenderly,

Et cependant, tante Léna, cette lumière c'est en vous et  
autour de vous qu'elle n'a cessé de briller depuis que  
nous nous sommes rencontrés. (38)

Simon has taken up the torch of faith handed on by Aunt Léna. His example transforms the squalid concentration camp to which he is doomed and his last wish is not for himself but for the collaborator Réveilhac who had been instrumental in saving the rest of Simon's family. Simon remains with his loved ones, after his death, like a living presence<sup>39</sup> which finds a response in the heart of his younger son, Jean-Paul. This young man (who incidentally has been converted to Catholicism) is open to

the action of grace, whereas Pauline, Simon's widow, has long since shut herself in on her bitterness. She cannot understand that forgiveness is not forgetfulness<sup>40</sup> but the free response, in charity, to the operation of grace. As Simon had forgiven Réveilhac, the latter in turn forgave those who condemned him. It is left to the abbé and Jean-Paul to recall to the others that

l'injustice est partout parce que le péché est partout...  
Mais si le péché est partout, la Grâce elle aussi sur-  
abonde : la Grâce de Dieu. (41)

It is for that reason that the abbé Schweigsam believes that it was through the intercession of Simon Bernauer that Xavier Réveilhac received the strength and lucidity to pardon his executioners. Grace, Marcel asserts, belongs to the supernatural order and as such can be called miraculous, in spite of - and all the more reason because of - a world which sees no need for God. The abbé affirms,

Sans le miracle perpétuellement renouvelé de la grâce  
divine, nous savons aujourd'hui ce qu'il adviendrait  
des hommes et de la société humaine. (42)

(e) Le Dard.

A similar selfless commitment to his persecuted countrymen is given by Werner Schnee in le Dard. Eustache Soreau, his co-protagonist, is a secondary schoolteacher who, having married a wealthy politician's daughter, is tormented by the barb of a guilty conscience. Eustache cannot forget his lower middle-class origins nor his former aggressive Socialist idealism. In line with his desire not to betray his socialist precepts, his every judgment is dictated according to a set ideology. Consequently he reproaches Werner, and old University acquaintance who has fled Nazi Germany, with not identifying himself with his fellow expatriates. But Werner, who has no political inclinations, accuses Eustache of judging others not on their intrinsic qualities but according to the category into which they fall.<sup>43</sup>

In turn Werner becomes a prey to guilty conscience, which he describes as "une espèce de grippe infectieuse".<sup>44</sup> His very success in France does not blind him to the reality of the sufferings of those at home in Germany. The barb of guilty conscience reinforces the "partisan commitment"<sup>45</sup> of Eustache who betrays his own ideals when he betrays his friend just as much as conscience urges Werner to show his solidarity with his compatriots still languishing in concentration camps, and particularly with his Jewish pianist, Rudolf Schonthal, who is dying in a Swiss hospice as a result of his treatment at the hands of the Nazis. Werner resolves to act in accordance with his inner urgings of fidelity; he decides to return to Germany even though imprisonment and possible death await him. Before he leaves,

he explains to Béatrice, the wife of Eustache, that he is taking this action, not for any cause like the Underground movement, but for the sake of his fellow countrymen. Furthermore, he realizes what Eustache suspects, that if he remained he would fall in love with her; and she is already very much attracted to him. If, then, he stayed, he would encourage an incipient betrayal of her conjugal fidelity.

With deep insight Werner stigmatizes the greatest evil of the time as poverty of spirit. But he reassures Béatrice that grace - more properly a viaticum - is given to the few rich in spirit to care for the many tainted.<sup>46</sup> Poverty of the ontological order is not only to have received less but to have not known how to centre one's existence on what has been received.<sup>47</sup> Werner Schnee manages, therefore, to remain faithful to himself and at the same time, by withdrawing in his freely committed act of self-sacrificing fidelity to others, allows Béatrice to be faithful to herself and to her husband. Werner will not, however, leave her alone to face the future. He assures her that he will remain for her as a living presence, just as his friend Rudolf is always present in his thoughts and prompts his fidelity.<sup>48</sup>

## II. Hope and Love.

### i. Marcel : traditionalist but contemporary

Clearly, presence is the key theme to Marcel's notion of fidelity. It is the channel of the "authentic" ontological virtues of hope and love which sustain fidelity and give it its true character. It is necessary to note here that, while I may appear to concentrate on Marcel's treatment of hope, there can be no possible exclusion of love in a consideration of his dialectic. Love will be appreciated as the melding agent of fidelity and hope; according to Marcel's presentation love is the Ground of Hope and the Main-spring of Fidelity. Where there is true participative fidelity there must be love. Marcel firmly believes that creative fidelity is of little value if not inspired by a hope for the continuing presence of the loved one. From what has already been indicated of Marcel's investigations into a theory of participation which finds its expression in an ascending hierarchy of I-thou relationships, it should be evident that love is the major theme running, like a leitmotiv, throughout his dialectic. Of particular interest is the importance he attaches to the "almost forgotten" virtue of hope. In this part of the present chapter I propose to show the relevance of hope, with love, to the subject of the thesis.

In the matter of hope, it can be said that Gabriel Marcel stands at the

junction of contemporary European thought and Christian tradition. Through his valuable contributions towards a phenomenology of hope he appeals to contemporary thinkers (outside the Anglo-Saxon school) with whom he can be related. Hope is central in theology, existentialism - and Marxism. We may say (although he himself may not be prepared to admit it) that Sartre was "redeemed" from absolute despair by a combination of Marxism and his experiences during the Second World War. For his part, Marcel was "converted" during the First World War, but his "conversion" was of an entirely different kind. Long before his own private harrowing experiences with the Red Cross bureau for missing persons, Marcel had considered, and been assured of, the value of love. There lies the difference between the two. Whereas Sartre still sees the other as a potential enemy, Marcel emphasizes love which led him to faith and from there to postulate his notion of creative fidelity. While he might share with Sartre an appreciation of hope, his whole outlook is characteristically different because he shares with Martin Buber, for example, the realization of the overall importance of love. And it is precisely because of his belief in the transcendental orientation of man, of belief in God as Absolute Thou, that both hope and love are vindicated and guaranteed of perpetuation in a supra-temporal ("eternal") dimension.

## ii. The central position of hope in Marcel's metaphysics

In his analyses of hope Marcel points the way for man to achieve the fulfilment of his being. Hope is, in fact, at the very centre of the ontological mystery<sup>49</sup>; for the exigency of being which impels man to fulfil himself is essentially active. This is represented by Marcel as an urgent activity since what is at stake is one's own being. This is, in reality, the soul which is the very core of being and so the innermost and most intimate element of one's ontological unity. Marcel ventures to suggest :

Je ne serais pas éloigné de croire que l'espérance est à l'âme ce que la respiration est à l'organisme vivant, là où l'espérance fait défaut, l'âme se dessèche et s'exténue, elle n'est plus que fonction, elle est toute prête à servir d'objet d'étude à une psychologie qui ne repérera jamais que son emplacement ou son défaut. Mais c'est l'âme, précisément, qui est une voyageuse, c'est de l'âme, et d'elle seule, qu'il est suprêmement vrai de dire qu'être, c'est être en route. (50)

The creativity of the ontological need is translated, therefore, into a concrete dynamism which is hope. Hope is the irradiation of the ontological attestation. My whole being, in Marcel's terms, is "invocation", a calling-for-God, an orientation towards transcendence. Hope finds its source not only in our situation ("être-au-monde") but in transcending it. Marcel pro-

poses that it is reflection on hope that is perhaps our most direct way of apprehending "transcendence". He describes "transcendence" as

cette espèce d'intervalle absolu, infranchissable qui  
se creuse entre l'âme et l'être, en tant que celle-ci  
se dérobe à ses prises. (51)

This gulf of transcendence can be cleared, not with astride but with a leap. This implies the need to spring above the earth-bound materialism, to escape the danger of depersonalization in a world of technology, to aim for something higher in order to land safely in "the other kingdom".

L'espérance est un élan, elle est un bond. (52)

Since hope is so central to Marcel's notion of the ontological mystery, it can be stated that his metaphysics, in its "intentional" nature, is a metaphysics of hope.

### iii. Hope is necessary to combat despair

Surrounded by a world of "technics", man can react negatively in three ways. He may claim total independence of God, he may withdraw into himself and foster his own alienation, or he may deny himself in despair. Marcel sees the urge to betray oneself, to "unmake" oneself (se défaire), as compelling as that which seeks expression in self-fulfilling creation. It would appear that by his postulation of "invocation" and "refus" as polarized extremes of man's activity in response to his situation, Marcel is proclaiming, at least implicitly, a kind of ontological manicheism. But, as we shall shortly see, there is a salutary kind of despair which can lead us to make the more "positive acceptance" of creative self-fulfilment.

Despair is possible in any form, at any moment, and to any degree. This temptation to despair, which is self-betrayal as Marcel understands the term, is all around us.<sup>53</sup> Its first weapon is fascination which freezes the creative impulse of being; the fascination of despair is baleful, he asserts,

pour autant qu'elle tente à créer une immobilisation et  
comme une congélation de la vie de l'âme. (54)

Having stopped the outgoing activity of the soul aspiring to pleromatic communion in God, despair cuts the person off from all else, and particularly from others and, in final analysis, from God. This is the effect of the "closed" attitude of despair. In a certain sense, Marcel affirms, despair is the consciousness of time as closed, of time as a prison.

Le temps clos du désespoir est comme une contre-éternité,  
une éternité retournée contre elle-même, celle de l'enfer. (55)

We may now understand the isolating agency of despair. Since it cripples being by working for its gradual demolition, despair immobilizes being in a form of spiritual suicide. This spiritual suicide may in turn lead to physical suicide as the final consequence of despair. This is what happens

when he who despairs no longer depends on Being nor on the being of others but identifies himself only with his acute loneliness. By shutting himself off completely from Being, Marcel asserts, he who despairs has already cast himself into the hell of his own making.<sup>56</sup>

From this argument we can see that Marcel is giving a philosophical interpretation of the theological expression "to lose one's soul". We are also free, Marcel warns, to "unmake ourselves" (*se défaire*) - that is, we are free to reject our being as creativity and cut all links with the Source of Being. In theological terms, this would amount to the soul's (self-) privation of God. Marcel believes that at the root of despair lies an affirmation that there is nothing in reality to which credit can be given; there is no such guarantee. It is, he concludes, a statement of complete insolvency.<sup>57</sup> He who despairs is bankrupt of being.

#### iv. Through salutary "despair" to absolute hope

Yet it is precisely where despair is possible that there is the like possibility of hope. Hope can only be when there is reason for despair. The two are inseparable, and their correlation subsists to the end. He explains:

Je veux dire que la structure du monde où nous vivons  
permet et en quelque façon peut sembler conseiller un  
désespoir absolu : mais ce n'est que dans un monde  
semblable qu'une espérance invincible peut surgir. (58)

When Marcel affirms our indebtedness to the great pessimists in the history of thought, in that they have prepared our minds to understand that despair can be (as it was for Nietzsche) the springboard of the loftiest affirmation, he recalls Kierkegaard's third stage of existence. This is that of religion in which man denies himself in the presence of God. This apparent despair is indeed mortal, but in the Pauline sense of "dying to Christ".<sup>59</sup> Through the most mysterious paradox this mortal illness does not lead to (ontological) death. On the contrary, it is through "despair" of this kind that the self is saved.

However, Marcel expresses some reservations on Kierkegaard's use of the notion of a "mortal leap" to describe the transition from despair to faith.<sup>60</sup> As for himself, Marcel writes that the believer is he who will meet with no insurmountable obstacle on his way towards transcendence. Such obstacles, he explains, will be put forward by a hope which is conditional and therefore not genuine. Anguish, as provided for by Kierkegaard, has a role to play, but in such a way that it serves to reinforce hope. Even so, Marcel sees a taint of conditionality in this kind of hope whereby despair is implied as otherwise inevitable. Marcel admits this "impure" kind of hope but suggests that we can conceive, theoretically at least, an absolute or

pure hope. This pure hope springs from the inner disposition of one who sets no conditions but who abandons himself in absolute confidence; he would thereby transcend all possible disappointment and yet experience a security in his being.<sup>61</sup> This is what determines the ontological status of hope : it is an absolute hope, inseparable from a faith which is likewise absolute, transcending all laying-down of conditions. This is how Marcel sees the role of metaphysics as the "exorcisation du désespoir".<sup>62</sup>

Absolute hope, he goes on to say, appears as a response of the creature to the infinite Being to whom it is conscious of owing everything that it has, and upon whom it cannot impose any condition whatever, "sans scandale".<sup>63</sup> It would appear, then, that Marcel is here postulating Being as God, the Source of life. Now if, proceeding from that affirmation, we propose that despair is really a declaration that God has withdrawn himself, we are formulating an accusation which is incompatible with the nature of the Absolute Thou. We are, in effect, having recourse to the psychological device of rationalization by which we try to cast the responsibility of our own dispositions upon Another. Despair, however, is our own freely chosen activity; it is like the consequence of our own withholding of absolute faith and hope. We are not prepared to abandon ourselves entirely to God.

#### v. Towards a phenomenological description of hope

Hope, as Marcel has found out, is very difficult to define. This difficulty arises precisely because hope is intimately associated with one's whole being as oriented towards transcendence. To attempt to define hope would be to run the risk of problematizing it by drawing up an inventory of its characteristics. Yet, at the same time, not to attempt a description, at least, would be to ignore an essential dimension of the whole ontological mystery. In effect, Marcel does provide a list of characteristics which are similar to those qualities which characterize fidelity, faith and love. He approaches hope in a "concrete" manner, through phenomenological analyses of its forms as manifested in human experience. He is led from these to an appreciation of their corresponding hyperphenomenological origins. Hope is more evidently linked directly to the transcendental appeal than the other concrete approaches and serves as the spiritual factor par excellence by which they all cohere.

Marcel presents a number of studies of hope as evinced within the human context : the man suffering from an incurable illness, the mother hoping for the return of a son from war, or hoping in a wayward son, the patriot hoping for the liberation of his country. While we may cast "le filet de nos interprétations dans ces profondeurs impénétrables" and draw up halluci-



nations, we can still let ourselves be drawn towards the "Light" which is God himself. It may well prove that our path towards the Light will be tracked along a constantly changing series of images.<sup>64</sup> All of these images, Marcel declares, serve to show that he who truly hopes does not count on possibilities. It is, he explains, as though hope carried with it as postulate the assertion that reality overflows all possible reckonings.<sup>65</sup> It is in the matter of one's conduct in trials and sufferings that Marcel's notions of hope and love come together. He tries to illustrate the powerful dynamism of hope with reference to one's love for a friend who is suffering.

He who loves, Marcel asserts, expresses his invincible hope in terms which are tantamount to saying : It is impossible that I should be alone in willing this cure. It is impossible that reality in its inward depth should be hostile or so much as indifferent to what I assert is in itself a good.<sup>66</sup> It seems to me that in this strenuous assertion Marcel leaves himself open to serious criticism<sup>67</sup>, which would weaken his whole presentation of the indefectibility of true ontological hope.

How is it impossible that "reality in its inward depth" should be hostile or indifferent? What does he mean by "reality"? These are two important questions which Marcel does not appear to have answered satisfactorily, let alone considered. He affirms that absolute hope will not countenance discouraging cases or examples and does not heed statistics. But it would seem that, according to Marcel, to hope against all hope that a person I hope will recover from an incurable illness is to refuse to face facts more than to refuse to accept possibilities. If by "reality" he means God - and here he seems to be closer to Plato than to Augustine - it is nevertheless an unwarranted leap to proceed from affirming that God is Creator to asserting the "miraculous" element of God's activity on behalf of the believer. The fundamental problem here is that of the reality of evil and suffering. Marcel appears - to me at least - to be in danger of contradicting himself. On the one hand he says that evil and suffering are realities which cannot be thought away after the manner of Christian Scientists; yet, on the other hand, he declares that the only answer to suffering is intersubjective love.<sup>68</sup> He does, however, return to comparatively safer ground when he declares that absolute hope asserts, prophetically, that a given order shall be re-established.<sup>69</sup> Immortality is the locus of absolute hope; such is the infinite credit hope places in God as Thou who, somehow, will not disappoint me, if not in this life, certainly in the next.<sup>70</sup>

#### vi. Properties of intersubjective hope

##### (a) Openness.

Hope, being the sustaining force of fidelity, is characterized by the same qualities which distinguish its expression. Whereas despair is a statement of spiritual bankruptcy, hope implies openness or credit. Hope is primarily open and available to the permeation of intersubjective presence. Hope is expansive : it resists all attempts at restriction within the engulfing circle of the self. Hope is closely united to being for it is concerned with the welfare of being, not of having. Hope looks forward to what I shall be, not to what I shall have.<sup>71</sup>

In one of his rare attempts at definition, Marcel offers, somewhat aphoristically :

L'espérance consiste à affirmer qu'il y a dans l'être au-delà de tout ce qui est donné, de tout ce qui peut fournir la matière d'un inventaire ou servir de base à une supposition quelconque, un principe mystérieux qui est de connivence avec moi, qui ne peut pas ne pas vouloir aussi ce que je veux, du moins si ce que je veux mérite effectivement d'être voulu et est en fait voulu par tout moi-même. (72)

Despite Marcel's reluctance to be explicit, this "mysterious principle" can only be God whose activity is reflected in the "ontological need". The ontological need is then seen as the result of God's free act and leads to our awareness and recognition of God. When I hope, Marcel adds, I strengthen - and when I despair or simply doubt I weaken or let go of - a certain bond "qui m'unit à ce qui est en cause".<sup>73</sup> And this matter ("ce qui est en cause") is that of my salvation, or speaking more metaphysically, of our sustained fidelity in the fellowship of being.

The person who hopes for the welfare of his own being is not alone - he is "held" by the "conniving, mysterious principle" - nor is his hope restricted to himself. Hope must be intersubjective. Because he comes to know himself through his relations with others, he knows that his hope will be the purer if it includes all others. This presupposes an attitude of openness by which hope is differentiated from despair. Thus it is that when Marcel does proffer a more acceptable definition of hope, he includes the essential notions of openness, communion, and an eschatological aspiration to ultimate union with its Transcendent "object".

L'espérance est essentiellement, pourrait-on dire, la disponibilité d'une âme assez intimement engagée dans une expérience de communion pour accomplir l'acte transcendant à l'opposition du vouloir et du connaître, dont cette expérience offre à la fois le gage et les prémices. (74)

#### (b) Patience and courage.

It is in the matter of suffering and trial that hope is shown to be characterized by patience. Hope, says Marcel, is situated within the frame-

work of trial; it accepts trials as an integral element of the human condition. In this way hope is linked to an experience of captivity, which is also a form of the captivity of time. Hope's mission is to reply to the soul's signal of distress. The soul, Marcel affirms, always turns towards a light, which it may not yet perceive, in the hope of being delivered from its present darkness, the darkness of waiting, and of being brought out by conversion into the Light of Being. This Light of Being, as we have already noted, can only be God.<sup>75</sup>

Hope endures the present trial in a positive manner and is not to be considered as synonymous with passive acceptance or a distorted type of stoicism. Marcel rejects equally the objection that he is postulating a kind of moral quietism : the idea of inert hope seems to him to be a contradiction in terms. Hope is a non-acceptance distinguishable from revolt on account of its positive, dynamic character. Marcel considers that both quietism, which leads to fatalism, and revolt tend to despair.<sup>76</sup> Patience, by introducing a sense of relaxation (but not of slackening) into this non-acceptance, brings us closer to an appreciation of this true quality of hope. In this context, Marcel suggests that the everyday expression "to take one's time" is of help. The easing-off of tension counselled by patience allows for recollection both of the mind and of the soul's energies to struggle against urgent despair. The détente of patient hope is, therefore, creative. Thus hope has affinities, not with desire but with the will. The will implies the same refusal to calculate possibilities, or at any rate it suspends this calculation.

Ne pourrait-on dès lors définir l'espérance comme une volonté s'appliquant à ce qui ne dépend pas d'elle? (77)

In its active endurance of trial and suffering hope has also certain affinities with courage, providing we understand clearly the nature of true ontological courage (what Tillich calls the Courage to Be). It is not just the self-affirmation of the individual to counteract the deadening, dehumanizing influence of collectivism and materialism. Marcel maintains that this kind of courage can lead to nihilism, or the seeking of refuge in nothingness or the illusory claim to aseity on account of man's arrogated absolute freedom.<sup>78</sup> Still less is courage to be confused with bravado or reckless irresponsibility. Courage recognizes the risks inherent in the action to overcome the present dangers which, for our purpose, are those that threaten man's soul, the core of his very being. The most courageous person, in an ontological sense, is he who knows his weaknesses but nevertheless, trusting in God as his Absolute Recourse, is determined to act so as to achieve his salvation. True ontological courage does not count on its own strength but on a greater Strength, who is God, the fulness of the creative power of Being.<sup>79</sup> In the same way as not being self-reliant or

self-centred, courage consists in affirming its own being by participation in condition as shared in the world and related to other beings.

(c) Humility.

Hope, then, in Marcel's view, is not egocentric. But besides being never for the self alone, hope does not count solely on the self. To the possible protest that the optimism of technical progress is animated by a great hope, Marcel replies firmly :

Métaphysiquement parlant, la seule espérance authentique est celle qui va à ce qui ne dépend pas de nous, celle dont le ressort est l'humilité, non l'orgueil. (80)

Pride, a metaphysical problem perceived by the Greeks, recognized as an essential theme in Christian theology, and (according to Marcel) almost completely ignored by modern philosophers other than theologians, is a great danger to any metaphysics of being - or certainly as Marcel understands metaphysics. It cuts off the subject from communion, and so acts as a principle of destruction.

The Christian, who is counselled to practise humility, is warned by Marcel to be constantly on his guard against yielding to the temptation of paternalism towards the "non-privileged" unbeliever. That attitude would result in his placing himself on the plane of having. At the root of Christian humility there is an assurance that, in his quality as Christian, the believer acts neither on his own account nor through the power of a virtue which is his property. He cannot claim to be more worthy than the "disinherited brother" to whom he is speaking.<sup>81</sup> Humility must not be self-centred but should be situated entirely in God whom I invoke. Marcel gets somewhat carried away by his determination not to objectify God by affirming that, in humility, I concentrate in the Other (God) as Thee all the "reasons" for which thou art thou for me. In this light I exclude belief in my own merits or resources to cope with my unbounded commitment. The theocentric nature of Marcel's dialectic of these concrete approaches to the mystery of Being is evident when he asserts that through hope I extend an infinite credit to the Absolute Thou. The humble appeal to God (the Absolute Thou) as Recourse is the substance of Marcel's vœu créateur :

Cet appel suppose une humilité radicale du sujet; humilité polarisée par la transcendance même de Celui qu'elle invoque. Nous sommes ici comme à la jonction de l'engagement le plus strict et de l'attente la plus éperdue. Il ne saurait s'agir de compter sur soi, sur ses propres forces, pour faire face à cet engagement démesuré; mais dans l'acte par lequel je contracte, j'ouvre en même temps un crédit infini à Celui envers qui je la prends, et l'Espérance n'est pas autre chose. (82)

vii. "I hope in Thee for us"

Marcel proposes "I hope in thee for us" as perhaps the most adequate and the most elaborate expression of the activity of hoping.<sup>83</sup> In this formula emphasis is given to the intersubjective charisma of hope; it can, none the less, be applied to the individual person. Hope can legitimately be considered as a virtue inasmuch as it is the particularization of a certain interior force. In this instance this interior force is the strength to remain faithful, in the hours of trial and darkness, to the impulse of our being which is oriented towards transcendence. Each person's personal reality is itself intersubjective in that each finds within himself another "self" that is only too easily inclined to give up the struggle and succumb to despair. It is in his own interior citadel that he has to strive with as much energy as in his relations with others. But it is in his relations with the individual self, the first level of Marcel's theory of participation, that safeguards his own being and gives value to his hope. The second level of participation is naturally involved once we recognize that hope is not simply hope for one's self; it needs to be "spread out".

The religious implications of Marcel's presentation of hope and love become increasingly evident. The "thee" of the formula is initially the one whom I love, the other to whom I extend my credit. This credit, while kept on the human level, may be exhausted; it cannot be exhausted if I transcend my activity by placing my trust in the Absolute Thou (Thee) on our account. The Absolute Thou can only be God - or the whole notion is meaningless - so that Marcel's concept of intersubjective hope is seen to be as theocentric as that of faith. Accordingly, we can state that he incorporates the three main theological virtues into his whole metaphysics of being. The human relationship of the combined first and second levels of participation is transformed (even "transfigured") to a higher level so that the formula becomes "I hope in Thee for us". Between the "thou" and the "us" of the original expression the link, Marcel explains, is "Thou" which serves not only as guarantee but the very "cement" of the union which binds us together in unity.<sup>84</sup> It is God as Absolute Thou in whom absolute hope is entrusted. Bearing this acknowledgment in mind, Marcel encourages us to hope in the Absolute Thou for our own welfare and that of others, for peace, justice and wisdom in this world, for the perpetuity of individual fidelity and the pledge of our immortality in the "other kingdom" where we shall be reunited in the fulness of Being.<sup>85</sup>

Love is evidently at the root of Marcel's notion of hope : the other is inseparable from my thoughts (and what is not for him cannot be for me, either).<sup>86</sup> While he states that he would prefer agape to philia as the expression of love, following Nygren's distinction, because there is a triangular (self-others-God) character in agape, Marcel none the less admits

that intersubjectivity is in fact charity.<sup>87</sup> The beloved, to be truly loved, is beyond judgment; the beloved is to be considered not as a he but in his being as a co-presence with me. Love is creative of fidelity and hope : it is in the union of true ontological love that personalities are fused in

une sorte de milieu vital de l'âme où celle-ci puise  
sa force, où elle se renouvelle en s'éprouvant. (88)

Love creates the lover. Again, like hope, love should not be self-centred, as it can so easily become. We can degrade our love into an expectation of something from the beloved. Rather, Marcel suggests, while maintaining the other as presence, we must avoid considering him as a "that", an object in our experience. This is the same attitude we should adopt in our relationship with God; the transcendental orientation of the concrete approaches to the mystery of being reveals God as the source and guarantee of our love.

L'amour ne s'adresse qu'à ce qui est éternel, il  
immobilise l'être aimé au-dessus du monde des  
génèses et des vicissitudes. (89)

#### viii. Prayer as inspired by hope and love

From what has been said of hope as appeal to the Absolute Thou as Absolute Recourse, we can see the connection between hope and prayer in Marcel's dialectic. Throughout this section, the theological implications in Marcel's work become more manifest. He affirms :

La zone de l'espérance est aussi celle de la prière. (90)

Hope, for him, is not only "a protestation inspired by love" but an appeal to an ally "who is Himself also Love".<sup>91</sup> Thus, when I proclaim my hope in God for us, I pray to God for us.

Au fond je prie Dieu pour nous ... Prier pour mon âme,  
ou prier pour celui que j'aime, c'est sans doute un  
seul et même acte. (92)

I pray for us in union with all my fellows in being, because prayer is a "uniting with".<sup>93</sup> I may pray alone or in union with the Church in its official liturgy; the aim and intention are still the same.

As with all ontological mysteries, prayer can be degraded to the interests of self, but, Marcel affirms, prayer of an authentic ontological nature has nothing of the egocentric about it. Now, since Marcel protests that he is no pantheist, the Being involved in "ontological" prayer can only be God. Prayer is then the invocation of God in union with our fellow beings (the "ontological communion" or "Mystical Body of Christ" embodied in the Church) on our common behalf. The authentic existent does not pray, Marcel declares, for the sake of any personal ambition or success; those are the concerns of a world in which, he states categorically and rather aphoristically, there is no room for hope because it has ceased to pray.

Love and hope are inseparable in prayer.

La prière n'est possible que là où l'intersubjectivité  
est reconnue, là où elle est un acte. (94)

For a person without love, hope is not possible — only lust and ambition. Every ambition, Marcel claims, seeks to acquire some satisfaction. But of what good will such material possessions be, even if one has "gained the whole world"? Hope looks beyond the terrestrial, and therein lies the secret, for Marcel, or even the proof of its transcendental quality.<sup>95</sup>

#### ix. A "prophetic assurance"

But while it might seem that everything today is pointing towards the impending end of the world, Marcel warns against succumbing to what he calls "eschatological quietism".<sup>96</sup> Hope is vital, reassuring us that the present frustrations of our human condition are not final. Precisely because we are hemmed in by despair, there is greater scope and need to practise the virtue of hope. For the sake of preserving intact our ontological values — which are also those of religion in this context — hope assures us that there is "another kingdom" whose reality, Marcel asserts, is pledged by our intersubjective appeal to absolute Transcendence. Hope is "choral"<sup>97</sup>, it is united with love in its prophetic assurance that a given order shall be re-established, and this order is that of ontological fulfilment.

Je ne souhaite pas : j'affirme; et c'est ce que  
j'appellerai la résonance prophétique de l'espérance  
véritable. (98)

This, then, is the final characteristic of ontological hope, and it leads us to study, in the next chapter, Marcel's claim that the archetypal hope is that of salvation.<sup>99</sup>

Marcel warns, nevertheless, that while it is valid, from a Christian point of view at least, for a man who has hopes of the coming of a world in which justice and peace will be restored to proclaim that this new world shall arrive, it is not given to any man to prophesy rashly.<sup>100</sup> The prophetic nature of hope, according to Marcel, lies more in man's awareness of his condition as a traveller (homo viator) who must be prepared to cut himself a dangerous path across "les blocs erratiques d'un univers effondré"<sup>101</sup> towards "another kingdom" established firmly in pleromatic Being.

Nous aurons à nous retrouver et comme à nous rassembler  
dans le plérôme qui est l'être et, dans la ligne de  
notre destinée, nous avons à dire à la fois qu'il n'est  
pas encore et qu'il est de toute éternité. (102)

In the light of these remarks, Marcel's philosophy is more evidently "coloured" by natural theology. He borrows the term "pleroma" from Scripture<sup>103</sup> and gives it as meaning not just "fulfilment" but "ontological fulfilment" which does not belong to this life but to eternity. The ramifi-

cations of this notion will be shown in the next chapter.

#### x. Witness in intersubjective communion

At this point we return to the central notion of witness. This is the principle which, for Marcel, gives meaning to life as to be understood - if not appreciated - by those who may be wilting under the pressure to despair. My witness (a very personal matter) will be infused with joy and hope in love once I align my commitment to being in the spirit of brotherly communion as has just been described. My living witness will thereby be a source of encouragement to those oppressed by the apparent absurdity of life. Yet at the same time my witness does not deny the reality of evil, pain and suffering in the world. My hope, as Marcel presents its character, is ultimately hope of salvation but not of the Spinozistic or Stoic kind which negates suffering to render salvation and immortality destitute of their full meaning. Ours is, in all reality, a suffering world, and it is because of this fact that salvation gains its full significance. As Marcel says :

Il n'y a place pour le salut que dans un univers  
qui comporte des lésions réelles. (104.)

He suggests that only hope in immortality and eternity can overcome this temptation to yield, and that, because of such hope, my witness is the more creative. The last word in our existential situation, Marcel believes, is not anguish and despair but love and joy.<sup>105</sup>

To understand how this can be, we need to have faith to give substance to our hope. My witness is a guarantee of my own hope and love established in the Absolute Thou, and as such does indeed bear on "something" independent of me and yet in which my whole being is committed. As with everything within an existential frame of reference, it all depends on my freedom. I am free to choose to bear witness or to reject it. The first activity is a positive response and is characteristic of the authentic participant, the second activity is negative and characteristic of the spectator. It is, says Marcel, not just a question of whether we are merely onlookers or actually involved with this as the first and only choice. The essential point is that we are situated in our lives and in the world here and now, that we are witnesses, one way or another, and that this is the expression of our mode of belonging to the world.<sup>106</sup>

#### Conclusion

As has been noted<sup>107</sup>, Marcel began his philosophical enquiries with the notion of participation which in turn led him to the study of the I-thou



relationships. These studies were not abandoned but incorporated and transformed into his "concrete" philosophy of being through analyses of the approaches of fidelity, hope and love. These approaches are not only inter-related but serve as positive counterbalances to the negative elements of betrayal, despair and suicide in radical existentialism. Hope and fidelity, so closely associated as to be inseparable, merge and are given their guarantee in love. Marcel asserts that it is the sustaining presence of the loved one in ontological communion which gives meaning to fidelity and is the firm guarantee of hope.

All three are integral elements of our witness to faith - in ourselves, in others through the Fellowship of Being, and, on a sublimated level where it assumes the dimension of religious belief, in God as the source of all being.

Au départ de toute création, visible ou non, on découvre la même présence, et, ajouterai-je, la même sommation de l'Etre à l'âme qu'il investit, mais aussi l'acte, identique en ses spécifications intimes, par lequel l'âme rend témoignage à cette même présence. (108)

Recalling this key passage, we can understand, in the present context, that for Marcel metaphysics, religion and life are forms of creative witness. All the more so because, since there can be no objective judgment of being or of the subject, witness is creative insofar as it creates the subject. Witness is not the act of an autonomous subject but helps the subject come to fulfil himself. Marcel agrees with theologians that the most sublime form of witness is that of the martyr; this is a notion which shall be considered in the next chapter. In the connection of the "I-thou" relationship, of presence and communion, it is worthwhile to recall here that Marcel affirms that it is the "we" (nous) which really establishes the foundation of the "I" (je) and the "thou" (tu). Being is so intimately bound up with each of us as to be inalienable and unpredicable. Once again the dichotomy between being and having is revealed. Marcel's notion of true love as being true because it is of the ontological order may be summed up in the expression of itself as : "I love you, not for what you have, nor even for what you are, but because you are you".

In final analysis, the three main concrete approaches (fidelity, hope and love) to the ontological mystery are metaphysical translations of the three main theocentric ("theological") virtues of faith, hope and charity which are at the heart of the Christian's approach to self-fulfilment and union in God. We can relate Marcel's philosophy, which in this matter of faith, hope and love borders very closely on natural theology to orthodox (classical) theology, particularly when he notes that intersubjectivity is becoming increasingly more evident as the cornerstone of a concrete ontology.<sup>109</sup> God is not an abstraction; he is a personal God, the Absolute Thou

who is the transcendent epitome of all I-thou relationships. Marcel may well have borne in mind Saint Peter's allusion to Christ as the (rejected) cornerstone of the citadel of God among men and certainly also the Johannine definition of God as Love.<sup>110</sup> Given the central position of God in Marcel's thought and the thesis, although it is unexpressed explicitly by Marcel<sup>111</sup>, that God is Being, we can elucidate the key to the ontological mystery.

If we share in being and are impelled to recognize this participation by something which is deep within us and "in connivance with being", our fellowship can be seen to be what theologians call the Mystical Body. Marcel himself admits this :

Une métaphysique de l'amour ... ne peut que culminer  
dans la doctrine du Corps Mystique. (112)

He hesitates to make this liaison more explicit, because, despite his own frequent incursions, he deems himself ill-equipped to proceed into the realm of theology. Nevertheless and notwithstanding his "évasions par en haut"<sup>113</sup>, we can conclude that, through his attempted correlation of philosophical and theological concepts, Marcel endeavours to dissolve the divorce between philosophy and theology which he seems to blame on the humanistic pressures of the Renaissance and on Rationalism in particular<sup>114</sup>, and to restore a working compatibility of the two disciplines within the framework of a theistic metaphysics.

In the following chapter we shall see how Marcel deals with the paradoxical truth of Christianity : that we are in this life to gain access to another, a higher form of existence - or more precisely (since existence implies finitude and temporality) a more complete form of being, in fact its fulfilment, the "Pleroma". To arrive at this Marcel declares that we must postulate eternity, immortality and the possibility of salvation which all motivate hope and are the pledge of fidelity. And the gateway to this "other kingdom" is death.

#### FOOTNOTES TO CHAPTER FIVE

1. Pleroma (πλήρωμα), meaning "filling, fulness, or plenitude" (Oxford English Dictionary), is interpreted by Marcel in the last-given sense. It is also the sense in which the term is employed in the New Testament. In Saint Paul's Epistle to the Colossians (2: 9) "pleroma" is translated in the sense of the "fulness" of the Godhead : *ὅτι ἐν αὐτῷ κατοικεῖ πᾶν τὸ πληρῶμα τῆς Θεότητος σωματικῶς*.

2. Saint Paul to the Athenians, Acts 17: 28. The expression was suggested by the poet Epimenides of Cnossos who "flourished" in the sixth century B.C. (Note from the Jerusalem Bible, London, Darton, Longman and Todd, 1966, II, 231).
3. It is, as Gallagher comments (op. cit., 120), at the point of our participation in the Inexhaustible. This Inexhaustible is Being itself, that is to say, God. The abstract study of anything involves subdividing the object for clinical analysis; when this object is the self, there is "objectification". The concrete, on the other hand, is "that which is apprehended by a self in which the faculties are not dissociated." Marcel calls for a study of the self in its unity; this is therefore a study of the self in its most intimate, inalienable relations with its essence, which is being.
4. DH 94.
5. EA I 51.
6. See EPC 229-231 for Marcel's phenomenological studies of constancy. Further to his comments on constancy and fidelity, Marcel considers the matter of promise. He notes that Nietzsche has observed that man is the only being who may make promises. We cannot, Marcel concludes, really foresee or foretell our future dispositions. We should be inauthentic if we claim that all our promises are unconditional. In order to avoid compromising ourselves, he explains, we attach - implicitly or explicitly - a proviso to our promise: "If I haven't by then changed my ideas, my feelings ..." We should beware of a frivolous commitment. If we claim to be perfectly sincere, we have no right to enter upon such a kind of commitment, particularly when we know that it is materially impossible to keep it. (EA I 54-55). cf. Chapter 4, p. 105.
7. PACMO 78. For the same reason fidelity cannot be prescribed within limits (HV 176). cf. HV 31 (see Chapter 2, p. 51).
8. EA I 69.
9. PACMO 77, HV 116, 169-170, EPC 232.
10. HV 176: "C'est par là que la fidélité révèle sa vraie nature qui est d'être un témoignage, une attestation." He concludes by way of preparing for what is to follow in the script: "c'est par là aussi qu'une éthique qui la prend pour centre est irrésistiblement conduite à se suspendre au plus qu'humain, à une volonté d'inconditionnalité qui est en nous l'exigence et la marque même de l'Absolu."
11. EPC 250. If, then, faith is one aspect of "being's grasp on us" (cf. Chapter 4, p. 125), fidelity is another aspect of the grasp of Being. Fidelity is faith translated into action. Again, we recall that God's freedom - in the sense of his free act - is manifested as "being's grasp on us" (cf. Chapter 4, p. 107). Fidelity could then be seen as dependent on God's invitation, through grace; and this notion entails that of prevenience (cf. Chapter 3, p. 87) and can lead to the objection of predestination as given in the context of faith (cf. Chapter 4, fn 23, p. 129). Concerning the recognition of God as Absolute Presence, in the context of faith, see Chapter 3, pp. 82-83, 92, Chapter 4, p. 123.
12. cf. Chapter 4, pp. 110-111.
13. EA I 55. cf. Chapter 4, p. 105.
14. JM 40. See Chapter 4, p. 109. Gallagher hastens to note Marcel's reluctance to delve too deeply into a natural-theological form of philosophy. "In no case, however," Gallagher points out, "is fidelity tied to a specific dogmatized version of the Absolute: in so far as it remains adherence to a presence, it always overruns our attempts to delineate its object, for 'the more effectively I participate in being, the less I am able to know or to say in what I participate' (RI 80 [EPC 91])." - Gallagher, op. cit., 73. This is, of course, the reason for Marcel's avoiding the proposition of any objective-type definition of God.

15. EPC 222. cf. EPC 254-257, Chapter 4, p. 123.
16. EA I 119.
17. EPC 248. Emphasis mine (cf. Chapter 3, pp. 83, 92).
18. HV 174.
19. HV 116 : "Le mystère familial est un mystère de fidélité et d'espérance; la fidélité la plus authentique est une fidélité créatrice." Marriage can, then, in a religious context, be considered as a sacrament, a sign (witness) of a grace by which creative fidelity achieves its sublime expression as a commitment made in the presence of the Transcendent Thou who is called upon as the Witness par excellence of the union. Such a commitment, however, will be degraded if it assumes a contractual character - in that case Marcel dismisses it as being no better than a bribe. In his view fatherhood is not synonymous with procreation; to create, he remarks often, is never to produce (HV 30, 132, PI 114, HP 56, ME II 46, Schg 45-46). He comments further : "Il y a quelque chose d'outrageant pour la dignité même de la personne dans le fait pour un être d'envisager son conjoint comme simple instrument de reproduction. L'oeuvre de chair se dégrade ici, et de terribles revanches se préparent pour le temps où les puissances méconnues et opprimées qui sont au fond de l'âme humaine secoueront le joug qui leur a été tyranniquement imposé. Il n'est donc certainement pas vrai de dire que la procréation est la fin du mariage" (HV 113). cf. EPC 120.
20. HV 131. He adds : "En effet, contrairement à ce que suppose un humanisme incapable de dégager ses propres implications métaphysiques, il y a tout lieu de penser que le rapport entre Dieu le Père et Dieu le Fils n'est aucunement le produit d'une sublimation qui se serait exercée sur les rapports strictement humains, mais que ce sont bien plutôt ces rapports humains eux-mêmes qui, au cours de l'histoire, se sont approfondis et renouvelés sous l'action d'une Idée transcendante, sans laquelle ce que nous appelons notre nature n'aurait jamais pu se déployer tout entière." Marcel devotes a chapter of Etre et avoir (II, 79-121) to a consideration of Peter Wust's expression of life-piety.
21. ME II 141.
22. Schg 48.
23. HV 152.
24. HV 159.
25. HV 160-161. This passage prepares us for the content of Chapter 6.
26. EPC 243. For an illustrative example of this apparent paradox, see the experience of Pascal Laumière in Rome n'est plus dans Rome (Appendix 2, III B).
27. EA I 119. Werner Schnee is ontologically faithful when he declares: "La cause ne m'intéresse pas; les hommes m'intéressent" (le Dard 115). Marcel explains by distinguishing between obedience and fidelity in a phenomenological study of a soldier's relationship with his commander. "La fonction du chef est de commander, la fonction du sous-ordre est d'exécuter, c'est-à-dire d'obéir. La fonction, dis-je : il suit de là que le devoir d'obéissance n'engage pas foncièrement et nécessairement l'être de celui qui obéit ... (Je serais porté à croire que) l'obéissance en tant que telle va au chef en tant qu'homme, en tant qu'il est un tel et non tel autre; là où la qualité humaine du chef intervient, c'est la fidélité qui apparaît" (HV 168-169).
28. PR-GM 46.
29. Seymour Cain (op. cit., 89) summarizes Marcel's intention : "You may not understand what it means to believe in God, but you may have some sense of what it means to trust a friend or be faithful to a wife." Marcel devotes two chapters of Homo Viator to a phenomenological study

- of "the mystery of the family", and of fatherhood in particular. He shows how, by sharing in creation, man can share in the essence of Being, which is reflected in theology where God's essential activity is understood as creation.
30. EPC 223.
  31. CA 135. cf. DH 142, Schg 110. See Appendix 2, IV, pp. 232, 236.
  32. Commenting on their mutual misapprehension of fidelity, Marcel wrote in the Revue hebdomadaire (1923, p. 496) : "Comment la fidélité d'un autre, c'est-à-dire sa foi, son être même, pourrait-elle être jugée? Ne sommes-nous pas là en dehors de l'étroit domaine où le jugement moral peut légitimement s'exercer? La conduite seule peut être jugée, c'est-à-dire confrontée avec des normes socialement utiles, pratiquement incontestables. La fidélité d'un être à un être ne peut pas être appréciée, il n'en existe pas de critère : il n'y a rien là, au surplus, dont nous puissions avoir à rendre compte à un tiers. Abel traite Jacques en débiteur insolvable, sans prendre garde que dans l'ordre de l'amour et de la foi il ne saurait y avoir de dette ni de créance."
  33. EA I 55.
  34. MTNPLV 203-204, 208. See Chapter 6, pp. 185-186.
  35. SC 61-69, 73, 125-127.
  36. SC 118. cf. Edith Lechevallier in l'Insondable (PI 229). For insights into the character of Aunt Léna, see SC 116, 118-119, 126, 129, 154-158.
  37. SC 151-152. cf. le Monde cassé in which Geneviève, the sister of the late Dom Maurice, is also unaware of the effect of her message (see Appendix 2, II, p. 226).
  38. SC 157-158.
  39. SC 175. cf. le Dard 118.
  40. SC 169. cf. the situation of both Claude and Edmée Lemoyne in Un Homme de Dieu (Appendix 2, I).
  41. SC 178.
  42. SC 179.
  43. DH 158. cf. le Dard 49-52, 64, 83.
  44. Le Dard 111.
  45. PR-GM 108.
  46. Le Dard 117-118. cf. l'Emissaire (SdI 239).
  47. This is not to say that Marcel is postulating quietism. See below, fn 76.
  48. Le Dard 118. (Werner is speaking to Béatrice) : "Vous penserez à moi comme je pense à Rudolf. Plus tard je vous habiterai comme Rudolf m'habite ... Et vous vous rappellerez alors ce que je vous ai dit il y a quelques semaines : [actually he was then speaking to his wife Gisela, le Dard 87] S'il n'y avait que les vivants, (je pense que la terre serait tout à fait inhabitable)."
  49. PACMO 69.
  50. HV 10. cf. EA I 100 : "L'âme n'est que par espérance; l'espérance est peut-être l'étoffe même dont notre âme est faite"; and Saint Paul, Hebrews 6: 17-20 - "In the same way, when God wanted to make the heirs to the promise thoroughly realize that his purpose was unalterable, he conveyed this by an oath; so that there would be two unalterable things in which it was impossible for God to be lying, and so that we, now that we have found safety, should have a strong encouragement to take a firm

grip on the hope that is held out to us. Here we have an anchor for our soul, as sure as it is firm, and reaching right through beyond the veil where Jesus has entered before us and on our behalf."

51. EA II 28. Generally, it would appear that Marcel interprets "soul" as the innermost, indivisible and inseparable element of our being. But in the light of this passage, he would seem also to understand a possible cleavage between "être" and "âme" which is "transcendence". This can only mean, as I see it, that the soul, which is the more spiritual component of our being, aspiring to rejoin the transcendental communion where soul and being are truly conjoined indissolubly, provides just that impetus which is manifested in the "ontological need". It also indicates the orientation towards transcendence of the ontological need. There can be seen, I think, slight traces of a "residue of Platonism" in Marcel's concept of the soul. These can be seen in his later remarks on the "mysterious principle" which is "at connivance with my being" (see p. 156 and, below, fn 72) and which may be identified as "reality" by which he must mean God, bearing in mind his lingering preference for τὸ ὄντως ὄν to denote "being" (see Chapter 3, p. 78).
52. EA I 98.
53. PI 181. cf. EA I 118, 137, PACMO 66, 69, HCH 71-72, SdI 241, 267, les Coeurs avides 91.
54. "Structure de l'Espérance" (in Dieu Vivant, No. 19, 1951), 74. cf. HV 54. More than the basilisk stare of the Baudelairean houka-smoking personification of Ennui or Satan Trismegistes who "knows the power of dissolving the precious metal of our wills", Marcel refers to the Medusa myth as a symbol of this aspect of despair. For Sartre, the mythological hero-type is Orestes; for Marcel it is Perseus (PI 181). The malevolent action of despair is directed against the flame of enthusiasm for life, so characteristic of the young. It is against this urge to "prey upon himself" that Marc-André in Rome n'est plus dans Rome rebels, even if he finds little scope for communication with his uncle Pascal who represents the "Establishment". Marcel comments on the frustration arising from the conflict of generations which can lead so easily to despair. He indicates that much of the blame can be apportioned to the sense of superiority which, rightly or wrongly, fills those people who imagine that they represent universal wisdom to the young people whose "wild presumption" needs to be mortified as much as possible. cf. RPR 40-41, 50, 52, 54, 58, MTNPLV 44, 54, 132, HV 67.
55. "Structure de l'Espérance", loc. cit., 76. As we shall see (p. 156), hope is "open". On the "captivity of time", cf. ME II 160, HV 41.
56. Mélanie, in la Fin des temps, says: "On n'a pas le droit de désespérer. Le désespoir, c'est déjà le suicide." She adds, "Il me semble que celui-ci qui désespère c'est comme lorsque avant de désespérer on bouche soigneusement toutes les fentes pour que l'air n'entre pas. C'est une action, c'est un péché" (SdI 297-298). cf. "Structure de l'Espérance", loc. cit. 76: "Le désespoir c'est l'enfer. Et il me semble qu'on pourrait ajouter que c'est la solitude. Rien ne serait d'ailleurs plus important que de faire ressortir la conjonction très rarement aperçue, il me semble, entre le temps clos et la rupture de toute communication avec autrui. Etre enfermé dans ce temps immobilisé, c'est du même coup perdre avec le prochain ces communications jaillissantes qui sont ce qu'il y a de plus précieux dans la vie, qui sont la vie même. Je n'hésiterai guère à user plutôt dans ce contexte du terme d'amitié que de celui d'amour dont il a été fait de tels abus ... Dans ce temps (clos) il n'y a plus d'amitié possible; et inversement, ce qui est plus important encore, là où surgit l'amitié, le temps commence à bouger, et du même coup, si indistinctement que ce soit, l'espérance se réveille comme une mélodie émeut au fond de la mémoire."
57. PACMO 68.

58. PACMO 69-70. cf. EA I 112-113.
59. Saint Paul, Romans 6: 8, 14: 8.
60. HP 133-136. Marcel is referring to Kierkegaard's concept of anguish which seems to stamp itself upon the whole of the Danish philosopher's thought. At first glance, Marcel says, this is a fact which appears disconcerting and is not satisfactorily explained by reference to Kierkegaard's private life (HP 131). As for Kierkegaard's proposition of the "mortal leap of faith", Marcel comments : "Seulement, aux yeux de la réflexion, ce saut risquera toujours de paraître aventuré ou illégitime, et en même temps du point de vue chrétien qui, lui, se tient de l'autre côté du fossé, il est obligatoire. D'où quelque chose comme une brèche qui semble bien s'ouvrir au milieu de ce qu'on pourrait appeler le champs de l'expérience humaine. Tout se passe en réalité comme sur une terre bouleversée par une secousse sismique. Nous vivons depuis la venue du Christ dans un monde lézardé" (HP 135-136).
61. HV 59.
62. EA I 108.
63. HV 60. This phrase seems to be an unnecessary value judgment by Marcel and is charged with emotional overtones. Perhaps he is too sensitive to the feelings of those "incroyants" whom he is trying to encourage.
64. SdI 267 : "Car ce monde est celui de la grâce; et il devient de plus en plus direct, de plus en plus constant à mesure que nous y croyons davantage, et cette croyance ne peut pas être illusoire car les images qu'elle utilise, elle les brise aussitôt pour en trouver d'autres". (Antoine is speaking to Roger and Sylvie.) cf. Chapter 1, p. 15, Chapter 2, p. 55, Chapter 3, pp. 81, 90, 101 (fn 99), Chapter 4, fn 50, p. 132.
65. EA I 98. He adds, "comme si (l'espérance) prétendait rejoindre, à la faveur de je ne sais quelle affinité secrète, un principe caché au fond des choses, ou plutôt au fond des événements, qui se rit des supputations."
66. PACMO 69.
67. Marcel recognizes this objection : "On me dira, 'Dans l'immense majorité des cas, il y a néanmoins là une illusion'." However, he is determined to give an indication of the unconquerable quality of absolute hope. He continues : "Mais outre qu'il est de l'essence de l'acte d'espérer d'exclure la considération des cas, il faudrait montrer ici qu'il existe une dialectique ascendante de l'espérance, par laquelle celle-ci est amenée à se transférer sur un plan transcendant par rapport à tous les démentis empiriques possibles, le plan du salut, par opposition à celui du succès sous quelque forme qu'il se présente"(PACMO 69). It can be seen that Marcel has not really countered the objection.
68. HCH 94-95, PI 176, ST 248 et seq. cf. PACMO 58, DH 142. See Chapter 1, fn 58, p. 34, Chapter 4, pp. 118-120.
69. PACMO 69.
70. The problems which arise from Marcel's treatment of immortality will be considered in Chapter 6. It will be seen that, as in this context, Marcel's solution is quite often to disregard the possible objections and questions.
71. There can be no collusion between the self seeking its own interests and a hope appealing to a creative power beyond its resources. Hope is not correlated to desire which is found instead in the domain of having and the autonomy of self. Rather, Marcel declares somewhat lyrically, hope is "l'arme des désarmés" (EA I 94); in some cases, he argues, the efficacy of hope lies in its disarming value. It would seem that hope

- has the unusual virtue of somehow putting in a false predicament the powers over which it claims to triumph, not by fighting them but in transcending them (EA I 96-97).
72. PACMO 68-69. cf. HV 46. Once more, I must express some reservations on what Marcel has to say about this "ontological conspiracy". He seems to be begging the question, for what deserves to be willed? There would appear to be an element of circularity in Marcel's quasi-psychological descriptions of a rationalization of the activity of hope.
73. HV 62.
74. HV 86, 9.
75. HV 38-40, 50, DH 185, HCH 95. cf. Chapter 3, fn 99, p. 101. Marcel notes in passing the analogy of a woman expecting a child : she is literally inhabited by hope.
76. E. Sottiaux, op. cit., 75, calls revolt "la superstructure du désespoir." Marcel's philosophy is not quietist; see Chapter 2, fn 40, p. 66. While man is not totally free to create his own values irrespective of the other, his freedom none the less retains its value in its entirety. Man is free to create his developing being through fidelity which is active and sustained by the "mysterious" presence of others, and primarily by the all-pervading Presence of God. Man must act to achieve his potential and in this way life is a constant service, being of its nature consecrated to God or some high ideal. By freeing itself of the cocoon of selfishness, the human spirit strengthens the "nuptial bond" between man and life and by a creative vow of fidelity undertakes to put all its energies at the service of its innate potential which, by virtue of its orientation, is directed towards fulness of Being (cf. HV 118-119, 109, 152-153). By this, man attains a renewed reverence for life which sets the seal of eternity on each perpetually renewed act of creation. Herein lies the necessity of man's recognition of his dependence on a sustaining Presence who is God. "Lorsque l'homme, en niant Dieu, se renie lui-même, les puissances spirituelles que son reniement dissocie gardent leur vitalité primitive mais, disjointes, désunies, elles ne peuvent plus que retourner désespérément contre eux-mêmes les êtres de chair et d'âme que leur unité sauvegardée eût acheminés vers la vie éternelle" (HV 124).
77. PACMO 75. cf. HV 49-50, DH 186, and Chapter 2, p. 56.
78. There have been attempts at living such courage, but in every case the liberation from the mass has cost dearly. Max Weber argues that Protestantism, in its attacks on the power, ritual and even the dogma of the Universal Church (as it was then called), helped free man from worldly activities - but provided moral support for capitalism. Separated from the community of the medieval Church, man was made to face God alone, conscious of his (man's) own fundamental sin-prone nature and his powerlessness. This sense of isolation and progressive alienation was continued in other less spiritual spheres of human activity by capitalism and has brought us to the present-day situation which is the cause of Marcel's existential uneasiness. cf. Erich Fromm, Escape from Freedom.
79. See Chapter 1, pp. 27-29. cf. J. Royce, Studies of Good and Evil, 23 (cited MR 102) : "It is not those naturally ignorant of fear or those who, like Siegfried, have never shivered, who possess the genuine experience of courage; but the brave are those who have fears, but control their fears. Such know the genuine virtues of the hero. Were it otherwise, only the stupid could be perfect heroes." We may take an example from Marcel's play, l'Emissaire. Antoine Sorgue admits that he would not have declined the chance to escape from his prison camp even if he had known that his unexpected release had been arranged by a collaborator who had hoped to win him over. Antoine states, in all simplicity, that for all his weaknesses, he is not a hypocrite; he would not act out of



- regard for public opinion. Any such action would not be, for him, courageous (SdI 234). In Rome n'est plus dans Rome Renée jibes at her husband Pascal, reminding him that his only resistance during the war had been to keep away from the Occupied Zone, "Mais peut-on appeler ça du courage? La peur de la peur est-elle du courage?" (RPR 65). Troisfontaines shows how courage and hope are interpreted according to Christian ethics (TM II 182). cf. ME II 159-160, ST 128, 130.
80. PACMO 73. Hope is not to be confused with optimism. As Hocking has pointed out, optimism is possible only with some kind of monism. For, in order to think well of one's world and expect good from it, that world must at least have a character. Every optimism, he adds, involves a judgment about Reality which has a character and is therefore One (Hocking, op. cit., 167-168). Marcel defines the optimist as a spectator who is not involved; moreover he claims a superior "view" of matters than his interlocutor and, professing to see things better from a distance, is not aware that distance can distort reality. Finally, he is (like the pessimist) only a maker of speeches, tending to substitute "I flatter myself" for "I hope" (HV 44-45).
81. JM 277-278.
82. EPC 250. See pp. 144-145. cf. HV 41, 71, DH 185. Humility, like all ontological mysteries, can be degraded into a sado-masochistic craving for humiliation. It is in this light, Marcel claims, that some opponents of Christianity interpret humility. cf. ME II 85-86, HCH 187, Chapter 1, fn 112, p. 39, Chapter 3, p. 90.
83. ME II 160, HV 80-81. Just as there is a difference between "I believe (in)" and "I believe that" (see Chapter 4, p. 111), there is a parallel distinction between "I hope (in)" and "I hope that". Hope does not impose conditions on God as may be implied by "I hope that". Even "I hope in" can easily slip to "I expect from" to "I count on something due to me" and finally to "I claim" or "I demand" (HV 71). Marcel recognizes that the perpetually recurring difficulties which a philosophy of hope encounters are, for the most part, owing to the fact that we have a tendency to substitute for an initial relationship (which is both pure and mysterious since it is between being and Being) subsequent relationships which, while they are more intelligible, are more and more deficient in ontological content. This unhappy phenomenon is no doubt owing to our finite, human intellects which are more at home grappling with (soluble) problems. According to this process we tend to reduce the higher mysteries (of being) to the level of problems (and of having) so that they may become more comprehensible.
84. HV 77. A striking example of this metamorphosis of intersubjective hope is provided by Pascal Laumière in Rome n'est plus dans Rome (see Appendix 2, III B, pp. 229-231).
85. Paix sur la terre 59. Marcel is replying to the allocution of Carlo Schmid on the occasion of the presentation to the French philosopher of the German Booksellers' Federation's Peace Prize, 20 September 1964 : "Si dans mon oeuvre il est un concept qui surclasse tous les autres, c'est sans doute celui de l'espérance conçue comme mystère ... J'espère en Toi pour nous, ai-je écrit, c'est encore aujourd'hui la seule formulation qui me satisfasse. Mais nous pouvons expliciter davantage: j'espère en toi qui es la paix vivante pour nous tous qui sommes encore en lutte avec nous-mêmes et les uns avec les autres, afin qu'il nous soit donné un jour d'entrer en toi et de participer à ta plénitude." cf. the "Questionnaire Marcel Proust" (Biblio 33/7). In that year (1965) he gave as his motto the same formula : "Espérer en Toi pour nous tous."
86. PI 145. cf. DH 192, ME II 172, ST 74. We are reminded of the words of Werner Schnée to Béatrice Soreau at the end of le Dard when he refers to his friend Rudolf and by which he gives her the clue to true intersubjective hope in fidelity. See above, fn 48.

87. ME II 171-172. cf. HCH 141, 166, PI 186, PR-GM 123-124. See also Anders Nygren, Agape and Eros (Eng. tr. 1932), I, 83 ff.
88. EPC 59. This is the message of his play, le Quatuor en fa dièse. Marcel is commenting on the insight of one of the main characters, Claire, who asks : "Toi-même ... lui-même ... Où commence une personnalité? c'était bien toi tout de même; ne crois-tu pas que chacun de nous se prolonge dans tout ce qu'il suscite?"
89. JM 63.
90. EA I 92.
91. EA I 99.
92. JM 219.
93. ME II 103. cf. JM 169, PACMO 82, EPC 230, DH 62-63, 95, ME I 36.
94. ME II 106.
95. Schg 65-66.
96. HCH 162.
97. ST 209.
98. PACMO 69. cf. HV 201-202, PI 183. See p. 155.
99. EA I 99, 93.
100. ME II 160.
101. HV 202. cf. HV 343-344.
102. DH 121.
103. See above, fn 1 (p. 164). The affinity between Marcel's philosophy and Christian theology based on revelation is plain. Christ himself announced the promise of immortality when he said that he had arrived to fill the gap in being : "the time is fulfilled" - ὅτι πεπλήρωται ὁ καιρὸς (Mark 1: 14, see J. Baillie, The Sense of the Presence of God, London, 1962, p. 136, for a commentary on Mark 1: 14-15). cf. Saint Paul, Colossians 2: 9 (given in fn 1, qv) and Ephesians 1:9 - εἰς οἰκονομίαν τοῦ πληρώματος τῶν καιρῶν. Christ's announcement is a prophecy which gives believers hope for immortality. For as Marcel asserts that there is no human love worthy of the name that does not represent for him who exercises it both a "pledge and the seed" of immortality (HV 200), we may say by inference that hope is no less an affirmation of eternity. Both hope and love are founded on, and mutually reciprocate in establishing, a universal communion which itself can only be centred upon God as Absolute Thou.
104. EA I 93.
105. ME II 178.
106. PE 97.
107. See Chapter 1, pp. 22-24.
108. EPC 19. See Chapter 1, fn 119, p. 39, Chapter 3, p. 82 and fn 83, p. 100.
109. ME II 171.
110. PI 80, HCH 58, HP 117, EA I 99, I John 4:8, Acts 4: 11. See p. 160.
111. cf. HCH 141. See Chapter 6, pp. 195-197.
112. HCH 141.
113. HCH 99. See Chapter 3, fn 93, p. 101.
114. cf. ST 166, ME II 12. See Chapter 1, fn 46, p. 34.

## CHAPTER SIX

ULTIMATE UNION

## Death and Immortality

Beatus qui amat te, et amicum in te,  
et inimicum propter te! Solus enim  
nullum carum amittit, cui omnes in  
illo cari sunt, qui non amittuntur.

~ SAINT AUGUSTINE, Confessiones, IV, 9.

Le problème de l'immortalité de l'âme,  
pivot de la métaphysique.

~ G. MARCEL, Etre et avoir I, 10.

Le chrétien dans le ciel de sa foi  
sent palpiter la Toussaint de tous  
ses frères vivants.

~ P. CLAUDEL, Cinq Grandes Odes  
(III : Magnificat)

We have now reached the culminating point of Marcel's whole dialectic of participation in an ontological communion established and guaranteed in God as Source and Principle of Being. A metaphysics of being based on presence and oriented towards the recognition of God as Transcendent Being is of little value without the possibility of individual self-fulfilment in ultimate union with God. The "concrete" approaches to the Mystery of God, grounded in faith, hope and love, and attested in fidelity, are of no value unless they lead to God and the assurance of individual perpetuation. In this chapter I propose to examine closely Marcel's treatment of the questions which immediately arise. The two main topics which he considers are death and immortality.

It will be seen, however, that he does not discuss — he even disregards — a number of issues which could be thought of as traditionally central in a philosophical consideration of the survival of death. As for the notion of immortality, it can be argued that it belongs more properly to the domain of theology and presupposes faith; certainly in the light of Gabriel Marcel's general metaphysics, theology seems to obtrude in practically every moment of his dialectic. In a general way, Marcel's whole argument in his discussion of death and immortality is the expression of an option: there is a meaning to life or there is no meaning to life. The characteristic of his approach to the meaning of death is, therefore, his affirmation of the value and "sacral" character of life. His claim to show that there is a positive meaning in life is the basis of the further perspective of immortality. But Marcel does not appear to have anticipated any objections against the "positive meaning of life" as a satisfactory notion by which to postulate the necessity, or the reasonableness, of eternity; nor has he bothered to consider some of the problems raised by the postulation of eternity or survival of death.

## I. The Place of Death in a Philosophy of Being.

### i. Marcel and other contemporary "existential" thinkers

One of the salient features of Gabriel Marcel's philosophy is the importance he attaches to death.<sup>1</sup> But while he has even been accused of pessimism on account of the space he devotes to such morbid subjects as betrayal, despair and suicide, Marcel differs in outlook from the general run of existentialist thinkers in the matter of death. He highlights the dangers of our modern technological age which seems to have provided man with the weapons of his own self-destruction. The game of life has become

the game of death.<sup>2</sup> Too often, however, Marcel warns, man's enquiries, when of a "speleological" nature have led him on a descent into a Baudelairean "gouffre".<sup>3</sup>

For those who see this life as a Kafkaesque situation in which man is sentenced without any reason given, death is the definitive end. Death is one's personal "completion" as postulated by Heidegger whose interpretation of being and existence as Sein zum Tode leads to anguish and despair.<sup>4</sup> A purely-naturalistic view of life, as proposed by Nietzsche, would posit death as the end. There could be no transcending it and the adherents of Camus's "absurdisme" would be vindicated. Marcel insists that we must resist the temptation to interpret death as a purely physical modification, and in this respect he charges that neither Heidegger nor Sartre has delved deeply enough into the problem. As we shall see, neither has Marcel, despite his declared purpose to postulate the phenomenon of death as a participation in an entirely different order.<sup>5</sup>

This is not to say that Marcel does not recognize the problem of finitude. But he declares himself not preoccupied with directing one's attention to a consideration of finitude and death in a social perspective whereby they can be conveniently pigeon-holed as mere biological functions within the framework of society. He does not regard finitude as the limitation of intersubjective functions, nor does he consider death as the extinction of all possibilities. In this respect he escapes Copleston's criticism of existentialist thinkers at large.<sup>6</sup> Many contemporary existentialist thinkers have opted for "absurdisme", and Marcel does admit, necessarily, that the thought of inevitable death can be a source of the gravest anxiety and a temptation to despair. He himself has opted in the other direction by asserting that for the "genuine" existent (he who truly participates in the Fellowship of Being), death is the greatest test of the mysterious union between body and personality. On a more properly metaphysical plane, he says, death is the test, supreme and sublime, of faith, hope and love, of fidelity to the universal ontological communion.<sup>7</sup> He argues that this is a viable option, but the question remains whether he makes sense of this option.

## ii. Marcel's initial investigations into an ontology of death

Marcel's own realization of the mysterious character of death came at a very early age. It could be said to be his first metaphysical experience. His mother died when he was only four years old yet sufficiently sensitive to feel her loss most keenly. To this day he retains not just the memory of her but the strong sense of her abiding presence. He recalls that when he was about eight years old he was walking one day with his

aunt<sup>8</sup> in the Parc Monceau in Paris. When his aunt told him that no one could know if the dead were completely annihilated or lived on in some way, the little boy, already showing signs of perspicacity rather than precocity, exclaimed, "Plus tard, moi, je chercherai à y voir clair." This pronouncement, he claims, was no childish outburst. In some way it determined the course he was to take, and may have influenced his readiness to study philosophy, not as a burden or to please his father and aunt but as an absorbing interest. He recognizes that the question of death appears as a watermark in practically everything that he has written, above all in his dramatic work.<sup>9</sup>

It would be naïve to dismiss Marcel as a sentimentally gloomy philosopher. His contributions to a phenomenology of hope are enough to counter that allegation. As we shall see, his study of death is always infused with the virtue of hope. It is only natural that in his investigation of existential phenomena he has had to come to grips with this last great human experience of which even the idealists cannot presume to gain any data of verification. Death remains a mystery, challenging but not necessarily invincible. For a time Marcel dallied with psychism as a possible avenue for exploration of the depths of this "problem";<sup>10</sup> but he turned away from this unprofessional approach to redirect his enquiries within the framework of metaphysics.

Can we construct an ontology of death? Marcel asks. If death is viewed solely by the self which is bound up with the question, Marcel considers such a venture impracticable.<sup>11</sup> That view, he states, would be dictated by the fear of losing one's dearest possession, one's body and life. Belonging as it does to the realm of "having", this attitude, he alleges, is a distortion of the primal instinct of self-preservation. It remains on the level of primary reflection, principally because I can have no experiential knowledge of any future state once the link between self and body is broken by death.<sup>12</sup> Thus it would seem that the passage into death leads into a metaphysical blind alley.

When death is considered as a purely natural and physical phenomenon (the only future event we can acknowledge with certainty through both induction and deduction), the mere thought of it can exercise a terrible fascination over us, deadening our impulses and expectations, and urging us to admit the futility of life. This fascination is only natural but can easily degenerate into a fatalistic obsession. Man can be so hypnotized into petrification that, in attempting to come to terms with his death, he will see no way out but to find in his very despair a source of consolation. In a very vivid metaphor, Marcel recognizes that man, capable of despair, is capable of "hugging" death, of hugging his own death.<sup>13</sup> But, he asserts, it is precisely because of a "metaproblematic of no-longer-

being" (the "return to the néant" in Sartre's terms), that we can appreciate the equal possibility of a transcendent metaproblematic dimension. It is with this option of the meaningfulness of life posited in a transcendent fulfilment of being that Marcel concerns himself as an alternative "solution".

### iii. Towards the possible transcendence of death

It would be an illusion to try to dissipate one's death as only an idea; the idea refuses to go away.

La mort pensée s'oppose à la mort sentie, elle est au contraire transcendée ensemble, mais ceci veut dire ici escamotée. (14)

As long as I think of death as mine, Marcel says, even by putting myself in another's place so that my death becomes "his", death cannot be transcended. However, Marcel reasons that this transcendence can be shown to be possible through a study of the rôle of individual freedom, through experience, and by the postulation of survival in immortality.

#### (a) The rôle of freedom.

His analysis of freedom in this respect differs from that of Heidegger. I do not really have the right to think of myself as destined for death, Marcel asserts in opposition to Heidegger (as he understands him<sup>15</sup>). Marcel proposes that we can look upon death either as the abyss of the unknown yawning before us, or as the test of our love, fidelity and hope. If we use our freedom to opt for the first alternative, Marcel declares that, in reality, (our) freedom betrays itself by conniving with death's claim to a power of annihilation. But, as far as Marcel is concerned, the ontological counterpoise of death can be seen to be not so much life as a "positive" use of freedom. This approach would counter and reject the self-deception of life which transfers to death a power that only life can use. Positively applied, freedom becomes affirmation and is imbued with hope and love. In this way, he claims, death is transcended.<sup>16</sup>

Marcel's "logic of freedom", couched in terms of abstractions, can be simply stated as the freedom of the individual to make his choice with respect to the question of life and death. Marcel would advise that we should make our choice and live in the terms of that choice. If the choice is "positive" in the sense Marcel gives it, and this is the expression of a purely religious attitude, my life will be affected so that I may free myself from submission to death in its nihilistic or fatalistic aspect. But Marcel's approach does not really provide any solution to the problem. He would call it a mystery, anyway, and that virtually means that we can

say nothing about it. What Marcel is saying is, "I cannot prove survival of death; I only ask you to see this question my way." He hopes that his analyses of an experiential approach will be more intelligible.

(b) The approach through experience.

Although transcendence is possible through experience in every existential (i.e. ontological) mystery, the objection may be raised that this does not seem possible in death which is surely a very important event in individual existence. I cannot assure myself of the possibility of communicating the experiential phenomena of my own death. If there were an unequivocal relationship, known to all, between the individual and death, it could only be for the body considered as an object. Such an attitude involves isolating the body from its mysterious ties with the subject, who is myself. And even if I proceed from myself as subject, subtracting myself from my body, I still cannot unequivocally determine the relationship towards my own death. The "I" which considers its own death cannot be thought away as an abstraction. The relationship between myself and my body is something I have to establish. Marcel goes so far as to declare that, if need be, I have to originate and even invent that relationship.<sup>17</sup>

Marcel insists that we have to get away from the notion of personal death as an event.

La mort en elle-même ne peut sûrement pas être assimilée  
à un événement, ce qui reviendrait à dire qu'en tant que  
telle ma mort n'est pas quelque chose qui m'arrivera. (18)

My death, then, can only be an event for others inasmuch as for them it is "his" death. I cannot really anticipate my death by asking what will become of the machine that is my body when it no longer functions.<sup>19</sup> Now, some philosophers of the Anglo-Saxon school hold that death is not an event but that it sets the boundary or limitation of event. The notion of an event is that it is something through which I live. So conception (but not birth) and death are "boundary-limits" of event. Marcel does not appear to have considered the problem which arises for him. If he would agree with such thinkers that death is not an event, he must face the objection of the impossibility of survival after death. For if death is not an event, it cannot be lived through. But Marcel does postulate survival. The question of the form which this survival takes is one which Marcel does not seem to have considered in any great depth. This can be seen in his postulation of immortality as the perpetuation of fidelity in union with God.



(c) The postulation of survival in immortality.

From within an idealist framework Marcel had pursued a line of enquiry into the possibility of the survival of consciousness in a new mode which would subsist even when the habitual mode ceases to apply. He rejects this hypothesis as well as the idealist attempt to rescue immortality by asserting that the thinking subject, of its very nature, cannot die. Such a subject, he states flatly, cannot even live.<sup>20</sup> He then went on to consider the idea of continued communication, which suggests the continued "being" of others since the idea of communication implies reciprocity while that of a solitary after-life may well be unintelligible. In this line of thinking he was led to conclude that any real survival of consciousness is only conceivable if in the after-life communications by means of messages are still possible; that is, as he says,

si la mort n'est pas une désincarnation. (21)

While death is indeed the abolition of the usual type of instrumental mediation, Marcel sees it more as what J. Middleton Murry calls "the point of transference from the world of Time to the world of Eternity".<sup>22</sup> It would seem that eternity, towards which time flows irresistibly, is a supra-temporal dimension of the act by which I understand the transitory nature of my situation-in-the-world. According to Marcel's metaphysics, we have to postulate eternity if we are to transcend death, and survival after death involves positing immortality. But here we encounter objections which Marcel himself does not seem to have considered.

Some thinkers hold that immortality is not necessarily entailed in the question of the transcendence of death. They may argue for such theories as reincarnation or the "transmigration of souls", or that we live for a while, die, live for another while, and so on. Further problems not discussed by Marcel concern the nature of this survival : in bodily resurrection or disembodied after-life?<sup>23</sup> Again, the question of personal identity arises : does Marcel exclude the notion of bodily resurrection<sup>24</sup> and how is one person to be individuated from another in this after-life? Is this "other kingdom" in this life as we know it, or is it the "next" ("other") world? What are the characteristics of this "other kingdom"? and what form of life (not "existence" apparently) is involved - is it intellectual, cognitive or just "spiritual"? There are, then, many questions which Marcel does not discuss. The lack of answers makes for large gaps in the dialectic of a philosopher who professes to be deeply concerned about the perpetuation of intersubjective fidelity and ultimate, pleromatic union with God. We should expect more from a philosopher who stresses the importance of survival after death to give meaning to life.

Marcel's difficulties derive, in great part, from the quasi-theological character of his enquiry.<sup>25</sup> He declares that despair in the face of

annihilation in death can be countered by hope, and that hope must find its guarantee in immortality. But immortality can be based only on faith; the question of immortality, as Marcel presents it, belongs to theology rather than to philosophy. He himself has recognized the connection between immortality and faith when he wrote :

Cette foi porte bien sur l'immortalité personnelle en ce sens qu'elle est liée à l'acte d'une liberté qui est l'individu lui-même dans ce qu'il a de plus profond ... L'immortalité affirmée par la foi n'est pas un fait à proprement parler, elle ne se ramène pas à une survie empirique (car rien de ce qui a rapport à l'existence au sens empirique ne peut être impliqué dans l'ordre de la liberté). La liberté ne peut que s'affirmer par la foi comme étrangère à la mort, comme elle est étrangère au temps. (26)

The postulation of eternity and immortality is necessary in Marcel's dialectic if being is a continual process of becoming (creativity) in union with others through the fellowship of Being. The mystery of Being is unfolded in the process of transcendence and is known only after death as God himself. But Marcel seems to transgress his own boundary between philosophy and theology by the way in which he directs his enquiries into immortality.

In so doing he virtually admits the identification of Being as God, for immortality is bound up with faith, and faith is centred in God.<sup>27</sup> Without this recognition, hope in eternity is empty of meaning. By concentrating on immortality Marcel hopes to show that death can be seen in its "proper" perspective :

Nous devons vivre et travailler à chaque instant comme si nous avions l'éternité devant nous. (28)

The measure of man's transitoriness is God's eternity. With the prospect of eternity before us, Marcel encourages us, life will have a meaning : it is a period of trial before ultimate union with God. God is the expectation of ontological communion, for God is Being :

L'être c'est l'attente comblée. (29)

But Marcel cannot (even if he wanted to) prove the reality of immortality; his "solution" to the transcendence of death can only remain, at best, a viable option.

## II. Immortality - the transcendence of death and guarantee of ultimate union.

The whole notion of survival of death is a strange and mysterious (not in the Marcellian sense) one which has exercised many thinkers. Given

religious belief, however, this notion is no longer strange, provided the philosopher admits his belief in God who assures this survival. Gabriel Marcel is reluctant to acknowledge that his religious persuasion obtrudes in his philosophical thought. Yet, in this matter of immortality which he presents in many other contexts besides his "Présence et immortalité", he takes religious faith for granted. His application of the concrete approaches to the ontological mystery is based on his own acknowledgment of the reality of God - which he leaves unexpressed - and is simply the elaboration of his suggested option of the meaningfulness of life as opposed to the nihilistic rationale of "absurdisme". The religious element in Marcel's own rationale is revealed in his discussion of such theological notions as resurrection and salvation.

But in the discussion of resurrection, for example, he does not come to grips with the question. For a materialist the question of survival after death, let alone of resurrection, is meaningless. On account of his denunciations of technolatry, "having" and "functionalization", Marcel is evidently no materialist. He is left with two main alternatives : the Aristotelian notion of the soul's perennity, adopted and "Christianized" by Aquinas; or the traditional view of a mind-body dualism, propounded by Descartes, according to which the notion of survival makes sense. Marcel's dilemma stems from his aversion to both Thomism and Cartesianism. The end-result of his endeavours to effect an "acceptable" compromise within the framework of an existential metaphysics is an almost total disregard of the problems involved. We shall proceed, therefore, to consider his treatment of the notion of survival in immortality according to his general dialectic of the Mystery of Being. The only way in which his ontology can make sense in relation to this properly theological concept of immortality is by recognizing and admitting that Being must be identified with God.

#### i. Application of the concrete approaches to the ontological mystery

##### (a) Love (and faith).

In terms of Marcel's metaphysics, love is the key by which the problem of death is transformed into transcendental mystery. Love is recognized by Marcel as stronger than death. Absolute Love is God<sup>30</sup> to whom we aspire through our love of our fellow beings. Love is the creative force which sets us free from the mortal obsession of death. In the light of this optional view of the meaning of death - and of life - Marcel suggests that we see that, while death is an invitation to despair, it can equally be "the springboard of hope".<sup>31</sup> Thus belief in the immortality of the loved one is the transcendental prolongation of our earthly love.

To believe in the survival of love is to confide ourselves to a loving God. Indeed, belief in immortality can only be an act of faith and love in God by the "consecrated" soul. Marcel understands the soul as "consecrated" once it recognizes that God is its goal and source of worth and being. Consecration, therefore, presupposes conversion. A perversion of the soul's relationship with God will ensue as soon as the notion of contract for service is entertained. Marcel warns against any attempt to treat oneself as a creditor of God who may or may not pay his due. In this respect,

Il y a là, il me semble, les éléments d'une critériologie qui permet de reconnaître si la foi en l'immortalité présente ou non une valeur religieuse : il s'agit uniquement de savoir si elle se présente comme un acte d'espérance et d'amour, ou comme une revendication qui prend sa racine dans l'attachement à soi-même. (32)

This attitude is imbued with the spirit of possession, of "having", and shows up an ambiguity in the very notion of loss. The soul, we are told by theologians, may be "lost". As far as Marcel is concerned, on the level of being, loss is, properly speaking, perdition.<sup>33</sup>

This attitude of "having" can be seen operating in a possible reaction to the death of one who is loved. If we mourn the death of the loved one as loss, we are mourning, in a way, the loss of somebody - or even of something, if we have objectified that person - who, as it were, "belonged" to us. This is an indication, not of true love, but of egocentrism because we have regarded the other as somebody at our disposal. The more the loss is related to possession the more our grief appears as a protest asserting a right over the "lost" one, even over oneself. (We shall return to this idea shortly when we consider the behaviour, authentic or inauthentic, of the martyr and the suicide.)

#### (b) Hope.

Countering this ontologically self-destructive attitude is hope which, Marcel declares, can only take root where perdition is possible. Hope at its highest level is centred in entire dependence on God; at its lowest hope is centred in the consciousness of self and its pretended dues. Hope does not wait on God's goodness :

Il se pourrait en somme que l'espérance authentique consistât toujours à attendre une certaine grâce d'une puissance dont on ne se précise nécessairement à soi-même la nature, mais à la munificence de laquelle on ne juge pas pouvoir assigner des limites. (34)

None the less, it may be said that the grace awaited is eternal salvation in the ultimate completeness of the ontological union.

From a purely philosophical point of view, Marcel insists, it is the

death of those we have loved, or more correctly of those we love, which is of paramount importance, since they alone can be comprehended by our spiritual sight. At least that is what Marcel claims as his own attitude towards death.<sup>35</sup> Those we love, he affirms, have been given to us to long for, even if we care little for any "proclamation that love, light and Being are everywhere". He asks us, then, to adopt his attitude as a "positive" solution to the problem of death. He suggests that, given our agreement, we can appreciate the fervent cry of a character in one of his plays:

Aimer un être, c'est dire : tu ne mourras pas.<sup>36</sup>

If, on the other hand, we opt for the recognition that with death those whom we love no longer exist, Marcel warns darkly that we betray and deny not only them but ourselves as well, for we all share in the same being.

Dire: "ils ne sont plus", c'est non seulement les renier, mais se renier soi-même, et peut-être renier absolument parlant. (37)

If we take up his suggested option, we believe and hope in the sustained presence of those we love, an indefectible presence which is always there as we are to ourselves.

### (c) Fidelity.

It is with respect to the central notion of indefectible presence that we can run into difficulties of objectification. The "indefectible" can be covered (not transformed) by memories. Marcel has often insisted that our fidelity to the dead should not be compared with the memory we have of the departed which is kept like a picture on the mantelpiece. It is a difficult temptation to avoid yielding to since the more I have loved someone the less I can succeed in freeing myself of the haunting memory of his last state.<sup>38</sup> But fidelity, as Marcel postulates it, is not directed towards anything like a carefully preserved effigy which can at best be only a likeness and which metaphysically is less than the object. Presence is more than an object, it goes beyond the object in every dimension; such is the transcendental quality of presence as mystery. Presence is "wrapped" in being so that the loved one is not a "thing lost" but a being who remains present to my thought and to my heart, a being who has not been dissolved. There is, Marcel notes

(un) écartèlement entre l'image de la chose et des mutations qu'elle subit d'une part, la vision intérieure de l'être posé dans sa mystérieuse permanence, d'autre part. (39)

Marcel takes note of the objection that what is involved in this approach is pure subjectivism highly coloured by psychological moods which seek to avoid admitting the reality of death. Death is a phenomenon definable in biological terms and cannot be stated as a test. Marcel replies that death is what it signifies, especially to a being who has risen

to the highest spiritual level to which it is possible to attain. There is more than a strong hint that Marcel suggests that such a spiritual level can be the more easily reached by following and accepting his argument for his option. There is, therefore, an element of elitism once more discernible in his theory. Again it can be argued that his is virtually a mystical view. Marcel accepts this latter opinion, since he would suggest that "there are many things in heaven and earth of which (your) philosophy knows nothing". This same phenomenon, however, even of a semi-mystical nature, is not unknown to us all : we just cannot reduce the reality of death to terms of a biological process. Marcel cites the manner in which we speak of the great men who have gone before us, like Molière, Mozart or Rembrandt (all artists, it is to be noted<sup>40</sup>) in the present tense. We do not think, he argues, of their bodies which have long decayed; nor is it so much their material works, but their spirit and thought which endure and survive. To this, however, we can point out that their spirit and thought survive only because of the material works through which their spirit (presence?) perdures.

Accordingly, Marcel explains, while I may read, without evincing any great feeling, the announcement of the death of somebody who may at best be only a name for me, it is quite another thing in the case of a being (person) who has been "granted" to me as a "presence". Marcel continues, to say that this is just an unnecessary metaphysical expression of a common psychological fact is to obscure the truth which is altogether different and infinitely mysterious. To say that it all depends on us that the dead should live on in our memory is to revert to the conception of the other as an effigy or visible reminder. A presence, Marcel claims, is a reality and it depends on us to be permeable to this influx of presence which is the essence of being.

La fidélité créatrice consiste à se maintenir activement en état de perméabilité; et nous voyons ici s'opérer une sorte d'échange mystérieux entre l'acte libre et le don par lequel il lui est répondu. (41)

This, so far, is the argument Marcel provides to validate his option. Before we proceed to ascertain the key role of disponibilité, which is effectively this "state of permeability", in creating an awareness of the reasonableness of immortality, we shall consider some examples from Marcel's plays. Although he expressly declares that his plays are not vehicles for propagating his philosophy, it can be seen that the characters involved are all examples of those who, we may say, have "accepted" this option of the positive meaning of life extending into the beyond where it is given its guarantee. These characters become aware, in greater or lesser degree, of the presential character of being. While it is evident that Marcel

points to these plays (and others) in defence of his notion of fidelity to an immortal presence, we should bear in mind the observation made earlier<sup>42</sup> that this notion is only an alternative. The examples are taken from le Fanal and Mon Temps n'est pas le vôtre with a passing reference to le Signe de la Croix.

ii. Examples from Marcel's theatre

In the first play (le Fanal) Chavière comes to realize just how much his wife really meant for him only after her death. Although her passing had seemed to him and his son, Raymond, to be a beacon (un fanal), the sign of liberation<sup>43</sup> from her dominance, she continues to live on through her presence. When at the end father and son are reunited, after their disappointments in projected liaisons, Chavière declares, "Nous serons tous les deux," Raymond corrects him, "Non, papa. Tous les trois, comme autrefois, comme jamais."<sup>44</sup> While that declaration may not be appreciated as greatly significant, the theme is taken up again in le Signe de la Croix. Simon Bernauer's presence is still felt by those who truly love him; it finds a response in his surviving son, Jean-Paul.<sup>45</sup> Here, and more particularly in the third play as we shall see, we can understand what Marcel means when he says of the indefectible quality of presence:

L'indéfectible, c'est ce qui ne peut pas faire défaut là  
où une fidélité radicale est maintenue; ceci revient à  
dire qu'il est une réponse. (46)

Marie-Henriette, in Mon Temps n'est pas le vôtre, has not really been able to communicate with her father, Alfred Champel. At last, however, he opens himself to her in a scene which is reminiscent of that in Un Homme de Dieu between Claude Lemoyne and Osmonde. He regretfully assures his daughter that he is not in fact the father of a very personable young man, Flavio Romanelli.<sup>47</sup> Champel has become embittered with life. He dismisses happiness as an illusion when seen in the perspective of approaching death; life for him is a disaster.<sup>48</sup> Sensing that Marie-Henriette is more susceptible to a change in attitude than her sister, Perrine, he points this possibility out to her almost by way of an appeal.

The force of the call to a "transformation" is brought home to Marie-Henriette only after the death of her father. She feels that now a part of her is compelled to take his place as if it had received a sacred delegation. What she is trying to express is the need for the survival of his presence. What is certain, she tells the abbé Jourdain, her mother's confessor, is "je suis aujourd'hui le seul être encore relié à mon père."<sup>49</sup> But neither the abbé nor, later, Flavio is of much help to Marie-Henriette in her perplexity. She does, however, find one of the "chrétiens véri-

tables"<sup>50</sup> in the person of Flavio's mother, Sibilla, who had been, many years before, the lover of Alfred Champel. It is to her that Marie-Henriette can confide: "Est-ce que vous savez que nos rapports avec nos proches ne cessent pas avec ce qu'on appelle leur mort, et que, parfois, au contraire, ils se renouvellent et s'approfondissent?" To which Sibilla replies, significantly for Marcel since it is what he claims, "Oui, je sais cela, mais c'est un grand secret que presque tout le monde ignore."<sup>51</sup>

iii. "Disponibilité" and disposability (of the body) - the martyr as witness of immortality

According to Marcel, the permanence of love and fidelity can be maintained only by the will which has chosen this line of action. It is, however, always possible for an individual to adopt a contrary view and regard death as the deprivation of the physical presence of the loved one, while yet claiming to remain faithful. The possibility of this option is provided for by Marcel in his theatre. It is the "error" of Aline Fortier in la Chapelle ardente and also of Jacques Delorme in l'Iconoclaste. Jacques went further by hoping to transpose the "spiritual" Viviane into the physical. This temptation, his friend Abel points out, is beyond the reach of one's "purest part".<sup>52</sup> We must not be duped by our imagination, Marcel warns, if we are to preserve our ontological communion. By ridding ourselves of the vestiges of "having", the other can still be for us.

It follows, Marcel argues, that this same outlook applies to my attitude to my own death as being what I make for myself. The basic criterion is disponibilité, or its opposite, according as I consider my power over myself. If I think that I have the right to dispose of my body as being my own, I remain on the level of "having". On the level of "being", Marcel claims, I can see, with the help of secondary reflection, that I have not the freedom to dispose arbitrarily of my being. This, he suggests, can be seen from the examples of the suicide and the martyr who, at first glance, have this in common that they voluntarily dispose of themselves.

(a) The suicide.

The difference lies in the motivation of their acts; this involves their degree of openness and availability to others. A person who is so preoccupied with himself and his fate, who succumbs to a Nietzschean amor fati - without reference to others - denies the reality of their co-presence. Ultimately, if not initially, such a person denies the presence of God; God, for him, is only "someone (else) who..." If his attitude were otherwise, he would not arrogate to himself the right to dispose free-



ly of himself, for he thereby rules himself out and is no longer available. Suicide, Marcel concludes, is a rejection of others; it is a radical denial of the Fellowship of Being.<sup>53</sup>

(b) The martyr.

Yet, we may ask, does not the martyr act in a similar manner? He who gives his life, whether it be for an idea, an ideal, or for God, gets nothing out of it for himself. This, of course, as Marcel points out, is an indication of the selfish tenacity of a "having" complex. Heroism and martyrdom seem to be pure folly. Marcel would seem to rely on Saint Paul to reply that, in that case, it is a worthy madness; in the case of the (Christian) martyr - and Marcel seems to understand martyrdom only in the context of religious belief - the persecuted Christian is one of the "fools for Christ's sake". Marcel declares that we have to distinguish carefully between the physical effect of the self-sacrifice and the act's inner significance.<sup>54</sup>

By his availability pushed to its ultimate consequence, the martyr attests that being can transcend "having"; for Marcel, therein lies the reality and social function of sacrifice. It is the giving up of everything to be more. It is not the abandoning of life but its offering at the disposal of a higher reality. In his interpretation of martyrdom Marcel shows that he belongs to the Christian tradition. For the early Christians martyrdom had, as its special charism, the abiding presence of Christ who suffered with them. They in turn shared in his salvific passion so that, by their supreme consecration, they attained Christ and their salvation. In following Christ even to the sacrifice of their lives they brought the process of their spiritual growth to a sudden maturity by their sublime consecration which stamped with love (i.e. "sanctified") their potentialities. But because man is a material as well as a spiritual entity, death can be imposed from without in a way which could prevent conscious self-fulfilment. The martyr, like Christ, summons all his self, his being, and offers it to God while yet suffering death to be imposed from without. This properly existential view of sacrifice was expressed by Clement of Alexandria in describing the martyr as teleiosis (perfection, fulfilment) - not just because he has reached the end (telos) of his life, but because he has created a work of perfect love (teleion).<sup>55</sup>

Evidently, there is not and cannot be any sacrifice, certainly of this kind, without hope. In terms of Marcel's dialectic, the martyr is responding in hope to a call from the Absolute Thou who can never fail him. All hope, Marcel says, is "suspended" in the ontological realm;<sup>56</sup> the martyr hopes in God for his (accelerated) self-fulfilment. He shows that he has placed his being beyond his life and so he attests the true place of per-

fection which is not centred in the self alone but in God. While the example of the martyr may be forbidding and even embarrassing, we can appreciate how death for him who is so available to the disposition of God can be regarded as a release. It is a release from the temptation to betrayal, a release to sacrificial consecration. In this sense, Marcel observes, mortification takes on a new meaning as "releasing a little of death", it is the apprenticeship to a more than human freedom.<sup>57</sup>

Finally, the martyr points the way to hope in a loving God who holds us in Being once we have consecrated ourselves to him through faith. God will not allow those he loves to be "annihilated" (anéantis), whence it follows that neither will he allow those whom we love to perish eternally. All true intersubjectivity, which of its nature lays claim to an enduring immortality, is established in God. Marcel concludes :

A la racine du sacrifice absolu on trouve, disons non seulement un "Je meurs" mais un "toi, tu ne mourras pas" ou encore un "parce que je meurs, tu seras sauvé", ou plus rigoureusement, "ma mort accroît tes chances de vie." Il semble bien que le sacrifice ne prenne sens que par rapport à une réalité susceptible d'être menacée; c'est-à-dire une réalité donnée historiquement et par conséquent exposée aux forces de destruction qui s'exercent sur tout ce qui dure. (58)

The objection, however, to Marcel's analysis of martyrdom is : what significance has this for the "ordinary" experience of death, that is for the experience of "ordinary" people? Evidently, Marcel presupposes faith as a condition antecedent. But even communist martyrs can be said to be willing to die - not for themselves, but for the future ideal of world-wide communism. Marcel's description of the martyr is valid, therefore, only within the context of Christian religion.

#### iv. Joyous confidence in the immortality of love

From the example of the martyr, Marcel goes on to argue, we can appreciate that death can be seen as a release and that there are "deaths which are graces".<sup>59</sup> These are deaths which inspire us with hope and joy because those whom we have loved have gained the victory over the possessive fear of death. It is on this point that Marcel takes issue with contemporary existential thinkers of the school of "absurdisme". It is the basic idea of his whole dialectic of the possible transcendence of death as a viable option. The last word, he firmly believes, lies not with anguish but with joy and love; joy is not just the mark of being but its very upsurge. Joy, he proclaims, is fulness. When we act out of joy everything we do is invested with a religious value since if that which is done in joy is done with the totality of our being, it is done in relation to God. Any separ-

ation of the soul from itself, alienates it from God.<sup>60</sup> According to Marcel, the central deficiency of existential philosophies of anguish is the arbitrary neglect of what may be called the "gaudium essendi".<sup>61</sup>

It is this mysterious joy which animates the martyr's consecrative self-immolation which he sees as the baptism into a new life, an eternal life of communion in the plenitude of Being. Marcel believes that we too, the "ordinary" people, can arrive at this joyous victory over death when we reach the "pleroma", the fulfilment of being, as the martyr reaches his "teleion". What has to be borne in mind, of course, is that the "pleroma" is not situated in this life as we know it. We shall be able to accede to this "other kingdom" provided we are disponible so that we constantly make ourselves more actively permeable to "the Light by which we are in this world". This hope, he says, aims at using death in a positive sense to tear us from ourselves in order to better establish us in Being.<sup>62</sup> In that way we can share in the martyr's joyous welcoming of death as the gateway to eternity, having merited immortality and salvation through a life-time of fidelity.

La mort, après la vie, ne sera-t-elle pas celle que nous  
avons méritée suivant que nous avons succombé à la mort  
dans la vie ou que nous en aurons au contraire triomphé? (63)

Whatever the answer, apparently disponibilité is the criterion of our love. This is the basis of Arnaud Chartrain's act of faith: "Par la mort, nous nous ouvrirons à ce dont nous avons vécu sur la terre."<sup>64</sup>

Activating this joyous confidence in ultimate communion is love which gives hope its prophetic assurance of survival.<sup>65</sup> Marcel likens this love to a protective arch which enfolds us as a guarantee of our sustained fidelity in the name of the Fellowship of Being. This analogy is expressed by one of his characters, Antoine Sorgue (l'Emissaire), but may well be an echo of Marcel's own experience after the death of his mother:

Il y a une chose que j'ai découverte après la mort de mes  
parents, c'est que ce que nous appelons survivre en vérité  
c'est sous-vivre, et ceux que nous n'avons pas cessé  
d'aimer avec le meilleur de nous-mêmes voici qu'ils devien-  
nent comme une voûte palpitante, invisible, mais pressen-  
tie et même effleurée, sous laquelle nous avançons  
toujours plus courbés, plus arrachés à nous-mêmes, vers  
l'instant où tout sera englouti dans l'amour. (66)

Commenting on this passage (which is really an elaboration of a rather dubious linguistic juggle - "survivre" becoming "sousvivre"), Marcel asserts that that significant "instant" has nothing about it of the temporal event-quality (événementiel) but that it is already sited in the beyond. (Marcel borrows Heidegger's expression "jenseitig".<sup>67</sup>) Therein lies the secret of the transcendence of death as postulated by Marcel. It is a transcendence which, for him, necessarily involves the postulation of immortality through the medium of intersubjective fidelity, first estab-

lished in our fidelity to God. We shall return to this notion in the concluding section of this chapter.

Death is seen, therefore, by Marcel, as the test of fidelity; true fidelity defies absence, particularly that of death, and triumphs over it.<sup>68</sup> Too often we appreciate the worth of those closest to us only after their death.<sup>69</sup> This admission serves to show up the lack of true fidelity but can still be the source and impetus of a change of heart, a "transformation" of the kind effected by Marie-Henriette Champel. One striking example of a character in one of Marcel's plays who comes to understand the dangers of judging too hastily is Edith Lechevallier in l'Insondable. She concludes, in one of those "flashes of inspiration" to which Marcel refers, that

les vrais morts, les seuls morts sont ceux que nous n'aimons plus. (70)

As we have noted, love is the key to the mystery of death in Marcel's metaphysics. It is also the key to immortality. His argument is that just as death cannot be thought of directly without encompassing my very being, neither can immortality. I can think of myself as immortal only insofar as I myself am the creation of an act of love. Love itself does not create the survival, it envelops its affirmation and negates the demand for material verification. The more we rise to generous love, the more we approach a dyadic level (the I-thou [Thou] relationship) where all control of verification is superseded and becomes superfluous.

A partir du moment où la survie est posée comme fait objectif elle devient une pure imagination qui ne relève plus de la métaphysique. (71)

#### v. Faith and hope for resurrection and salvation

Immortality depends on faith. It is faith inasmuch as faith is essentially an act which refuses to be subordinated to any process of verification. Marcel's difficulties in this area derive from the fact that we cannot really pretend to describe the beyond or the after-life, because such is our existence that the beyond must remain in the beyond. This is the paradox: it is only on this condition that the beyond can become present and yet remain a mystery. Marcel's solution is simple. He does not attempt to describe the beyond. But he raises the questions of resurrection and salvation. As with the matter of evil and suffering, his whole approach is unsatisfactory in that it is incomplete because any problems and objections are brushed aside. Having mentioned resurrection, he does not make any definite statement on what will be its manner -- whether bodily or disembodied resurrection. He asks, for example, if death is not a "désincarnation"<sup>72</sup> and speaks of fidelity perpetuated in presence, and

claims that he finds the myth of Orpheus and Eurydice most revealing in this matter in that it gives an indication of his approach.<sup>73</sup> Certainly if by that he means that his treatment is ever near and yet unattainable for want of explicitation, that it will disappear on closer ("face-to-face") scrutiny, then Marcel has provided an apt allusion.

(a) Resurrection.

Because the very idea of immortality goes far beyond that of survival, it is impossible, in the terms of Marcel's presentation, not to go into theology properly so called, to appeal to God as a source of all light and revelation. Marcel, however, would claim that to attempt a study of immortality is to pass from phenomenology to hyperphenomenology. One finds oneself committed well beyond a philosophy of presence as such. We are then at the very heart of Being itself, and the metaphysics of Being gives place to the higher theology of God. Our faith in personal immortality, which is linked to the act of our individual freedom positing it in the first place bears on the inseparable and ultimate union of God and our own intersubjective unity. This union is formed by beings who love one another and who live in and by one another. Is God capable of ignoring our love or even of decreeing its annihilation?<sup>74</sup> The answer to this question, Marcel asserts, lies in the mystery of the redemption and of our salvation. This implies the doctrine of the Resurrection which involves the possibility of our own resurrection.

Belief and hope in resurrection would seem inescapable for those whose eschatological consciousness has reached apocalyptic dimensions. Yet while we may well agree that our times are dangerous it is not necessary to belabour the perils and incitements to anguish and despair. On this score Marcel is guilty, even if he wishes to achieve his aim of shocking us into a spiritual perspective of life and its ultimate meaning. He does not, however, make the mistake of interpreting hope as an attitude which we have to adopt. We do not have to act as though we were hoping for all of us.<sup>75</sup> We do not have to make up for the deficiencies of those who do not believe or who do not see the need to rush into salvation. Neither hope nor faith is to be interpreted in a purely voluntarist sense. The fundamental datum is that of our freedom : it depends on us to make our own decision in respect of our attitude to and conduct of life.

Freedom can, however, be enlightened by truth; in the context of death and immortality the import of the Resurrection, Marcel believes, can shed some light. It is what he calls the "spirit of truth" (esprit de vérité) which is to be placed above every other value because it animates them all. It is not an easily definable notion for that reason : it lies, Marcel says, at the root of any kind of definition ( or more accurately, he adds,

at the root of the requirement for total honesty). If anything, Marcel proposes, the spirit of truth is "a light seeking the Light",<sup>76</sup> the Un-created Light which is in effect Being. Since the more I move towards this Light the more I advance in faith, this Light is God whose Son declared "I am the Light of the World". The Resurrection is the cardinal tenet of the Christian Faith; it is, therefore, from the Resurrection that we may appreciate the relevance of death and the hope for immortality.

As a practising Christian, Marcel believes in the Mystery of the Resurrection;<sup>77</sup> as a philosopher he declares that he does not intend to proceed with any exposition of this mystery which, he considers, belongs properly to the domain of theology.<sup>78</sup> The question, however, which he does not seem to consider is : if resurrection is a matter for theology, to what extent is reason involved? Furthermore, just what is the significance of Resurrection for us? Does Marcel propose that we, too, who share in the same being as God when he was incarnate in the person of Christ, will also share in the resurrection? He himself does not follow through this question to explain why he raised it in the first place. At the most he urges an investigation into the harmony between death and resurrection; but he himself shies away from constructing anything like a philosophical prolegomenon to a metaphysics of resurrection. Such a project, he feels, can only be realized by a poet or a dramatist, preferably of humble origins, who has not read Hegel, Kierkegaard or Sartre, but who feels in his heart, thanks to a special grace, an urgent need to proclaim this harmony.<sup>79</sup> It will be only at the dramatic level, he claims, that this harmony can be realized.

This claim, of course, will have the grave disadvantage of being condemned as yet one more subjectivist attitude easily open to criticism and refutation. Perhaps he hopes that his humble dramatist will have at least read the plays of Gabriel Marcel in which the notion of intersubjective hope and continued fidelity is propounded in exemplification. For in spite of his respect for the impregnable rights of theology, Marcel does not hesitate to postulate that the ultimate aim of hope lies in salvation which implies the need for our resurrection.<sup>80</sup>

Il ne s'agit jamais tant de ma résurrection à moi, personne singulière, qui ne suis que trop fondé à mettre en doute mes titres à une pérennité substantielle - que de notre résurrection, celle de tous les êtres qui forment avec moi une constellation à laquelle je ne puis en vérité assigner de limites, sinon avec le genre humain, pure abstraction positiviste, du moins avec le Corps mystique. (81)

But, for all the lyrical expression, Marcel has still not committed himself to explaining just what he means by "our" resurrection, the form it will take, or if, since my resurrection is not so much in question, how our resurrected beings (whether body-and-soul or spirit is not clear) will

retain their individuality.

(b) Salvation.

It is in such a communion of a mystical body, which is of the same order as the union of beings brought together in their plenitude, that Marcel believes that the peace of salvation is to be realized.<sup>82</sup> Access to the "other kingdom" is not to be found in any anguished Baudelairean flight from the world of reality, as Pascal Laumière discovered,<sup>83</sup> but by the passage through the gateway of death into the great "symphony" of beings. A reflection of the harmony of this transcendent symphony can be found, Marcel suggests, in our present life through interpersonal relationships ("co-presences"). In this way, he adds, referring to the views of the Greek Fathers (in particular Saint Gregory of Nyssa), salvation can be better conceived as a way, a road, rather than a state.<sup>84</sup> In a manner of speaking, it is a state - a state of being : the final achieved state of pleroma.

To save others and thereby to save oneself is to die to oneself, it is to die to everything in this world. Yet, on the ontological level it is nevertheless sacrifice that is the positive counterbalance of the attitude of an "I" encumbered with self. Sacrifice, he explains, is both detachment and attachment (adhésion) to a higher mode of being, whereas the negative action of suicide is refusal and resignation (démision). Sacrifice, he says, is complete and utter attachment to the value of a higher reality of being. Marcel proposes that, by accepting absolute insecurity and even death, I may more easily embark on the road to that "other kingdom" where my hope will be fulfilled.

Mes frères ont besoin de moi; il se peut fort bien que  
je ne puisse répondre à l'appel qu'ils m'adressent  
qu'en consentant à mourir. (85)

If we try to hold fast to the palpable presence of the body in order to reach the soul, we are only showing how misguided is our appreciation of the mystery of being and in particular of the ontological communion.

The last word, Marcel concludes not altogether helpfully, belongs to the saints. They are the perfect witnesses of Christ who attached themselves to the creative source of the world and could yet come to terms with the world through the divine perspective.

Surtout le fait de la sainteté réalisée en certains êtres  
est là pour nous révéler que ce que nous appelons l'ordre  
normal n'est après tout, d'un point de vue supérieur, du  
point de vue d'une âme enracinée dans le mystère onto-  
logique, que la subversion d'un ordre opposé. (86)

Marcel's idea of the saint is somewhat coloured by idealism in that the saint appears to be more an abstraction than a real person whose quality

of sainthood can be attained by anyone fully conscious of his ontological value. The saint would seem to be in a class of humanity superior to any other, if not beyond the reach of the ordinary mortal. Marcel does not really consider the saint as encompassed within the perspective of his dialectic : the saint has already attained the desired union in its highest possible human dimension. This is all very well, but the impression remains that the saint is a person apart - a super-person who does not belong to the same class as us.<sup>87</sup>

Death, then, is an encounter. As such it includes an appeal from the Transcendent Thou to whom we address our invocations through prayer on behalf of those whom we love. Marcel proclaims that immortality is the guaranteed and indefectible response of Him who wishes us to be reunited with Him and our loved ones in the pleromatic symphony of spirits, of co-presences. Marcel's concluding remarks of his Gifford Lectures, which were supposed to be an investigation into the Mystery of Being are rather vague and too lyrical to convey any worthwhile message :

A partir du moment où nous nous rendons nous-mêmes perméables à ces infiltrations de l'invisible, nous qui n'étions peut-être au départ que des solistes inexercés et pourtant prétentieux, nous tendons à devenir peu à peu les membres fraternels et émerveillés d'un orchestre où ceux que nous appelons indécemment les morts sont sans doute bien plus près que nous de Celui dont il ne faut peut-être pas dire qu'il conduit la symphonie mais qu'il est la symphonie dans son unité profonde et intelligible, une unité à laquelle nous ne pouvons espérer accéder qu'insensiblement à travers des épreuves individuelles dont l'ensemble, imprévisible pour chacun de nous, est pourtant inséparable de sa vocation propre. (88)

## Conclusion

Even at the end of his investigations into the meaning of Being, Marcel still evades a positive definition of Being. As Trethowan has noted, "M. Marcel ... shows an almost morbid dislike of reaching definite conclusions."<sup>89</sup> While this may well be a "reaction against false abstractions and false generalizations" which he alleges distinguish idealism and to some extent neo-scholasticism, it is nevertheless an unsatisfactory lack of purpose from a philosopher who places so much emphasis on commitment and reflection. Perhaps Marcel is reluctant to use phrases and formulae already adopted by thinkers, like Lavelle, Le Senne and Blondel, who have also considered the meaning of Being and have proceeded from reflection rather than from induction or deduction to formulate some kind of conclusion. Marcel remains loath to commit himself with the result that he uses only vague terms like "symphony of Being" which may equally well be construed as abstractions.



Besides being inconsistent with regard to generalizations, which he freely makes, Marcel is inconsistent in his attitude to the separation of philosophy and theology. This feature of his work is evident in his treatment of the questions concerning death and immortality. He observes his own restrictions when it suits him to ignore certain problems associated with the matter of survival - of consciousness after death, of individuality in eternity, of the person in resurrection. He seems to be begging the question by referring to the martyr and the saint as exemplars par excellence of beings who have somehow graduated well beyond the scope of Marcel's metaphysics. He gives little really concrete guidance to the "ordinary mortals" (homines viatores, we might call them) to whom he claims his dialectic is addressed.

His whole philosophy is based on his statement in Position et approches, the blueprint of his religious ontology, that life must have a meaning if it is not to be a "tale told by an idiot".<sup>90</sup> Marcel is both a traditionalist in that he continues the themes familiar to the classical theologian-philosophers and a contemporary in that he formulates his philosophy within the framework of existentialism. His whole dialectic is the expression of an option : that life can find its meaning as "sacral" and as service<sup>91</sup>, in opposition to the philosophies of fatalistic anguish-dread and absurdisme. This option has value only if it is grounded on the recognition of God as the Source of Being so that the notions of presence, fidelity, grace, prayer, immortality and salvation make sense, being properly couched in the context or religion to which they belong.

The fundamental option is, on the ontological plane, to be or not to be. In terms of Marcel's dialectic this is translated into the option : to believe or not to believe in God.<sup>92</sup> If God is indeed Being, this fundamental option can be expressed as : to be, to participate in being "authentically" so that we realize that our being is oriented towards pleromatic communion with God; or not to be, to refuse to recognize the meaning of life because there is no God, no Transcendent or Absolute Thou in whom eternity (the locus of perpetuated fidelity in presence) is guaranteed. This option is at the root of Marcel's dichotomy between "refus" and "invocation."

By drawing together those texts indicated in the course of the thesis, we can show the connection between God and Being in Marcel's dialectic. It may be argued that there are not a great many, but to that possible objection I would point out that Marcel is very wary of formulating any pronouncements which can be construed as statements of a definitive position. Nevertheless, I claim, he has "let slip" sufficient material upon which to base my thesis that God is so central in his ontology as to be identified with Being.

Although Marcel stops "at the threshold"<sup>93</sup> of proclaiming that Being is God, he does say

Au départ de toute création, visible ou non, on découvre la même présence, et, ajouterai-je, la même sommation de l'âme qu'il investit (94)

(de) Celui que nous sommes tenus d'appeler le créateur ou le père, ou dans un langage plus métaphysique, à partir de l'être irréprésentable et incaractérisable qui nous constitue comme existants. (95)

If we are to find the answer to the primary ontological question, "What am I?", there is

Nécessité de partir de l'être même, de l'engagement envers Dieu. Acte de transcendance avec contrepartie ontologique qui est la prise de Dieu sur nous. Et c'est par rapport à cette prise que ma liberté même s'ordonne et se définit. (96)

Faith, then, depends on the act of my individual freedom<sup>97</sup>:

La Foi elle-même, l'assurance invincible fondée sur l'Etre même. (98)

Penser la foi, c'est penser la foi en Dieu. (99)

This is the basis of all intersubjective relationships; they have their origin and guarantee in Faith :

Je dirais volontiers dogmatiquement que tout rapport d'être à être est personnel, et que le rapport entre Dieu et moi n'est rien s'il n'est pas rapport d'être à être, ou à la rigueur de l'être à soi. (100)

(Ce que j'entrevois) ... à la limite il existerait un engagement absolu qui serait contracté par la totalité de moi-même ... et qui s'adresserait à la totalité de l'être et serait pris en présence de cette totalité même. C'est la foi. (101)

This faith is ultimately expressed in hope for salvation in immortality, or the pleromatic communion of beings founded in God as Being.

L'être c'est l'attente comblée. (102)

Nous aurons à nous retrouver et comme à nous rassembler dans le plérôme qui est l'être et ... nous avons à dire qu'il est de toute éternité. (103)

L'espérance archétype, c'est l'espoir du salut. (104)

L'amour ne s'adresse qu'à ce qui est éternel. (105)

(L'amour est) à la fois un gage et une semence d'immortalité. (106)

Une métaphysique de l'amour ne peut que culminer dans une doctrine du Corps Mystique. (107)

Certainly, from Marcel's discussion of immortality, we can only conclude that he does in fact identify God with Being. Since faith in God is primarily involved in the possible transcendence of death<sup>108</sup>, Marcel's whole argument is based on the option that the individual chooses to believe in God. The question which remains unanswered is how is it possible for one who does not believe in God to arrive at a transcendence of

death? Evidently, for such a person - who is not necessarily an atheist nor an antitheist (he may, for example, adhere strictly to the Buddhist idea of Nirvana which does not take into account the personal, immortal soul) - the whole question of immortality may be meaningless and discussion upon it fruitless. Even if Marcel is not prepared to admit it, his philosophy is tinged with elitism and definitely theocentric - not just an "applied theocentrism". His basic dialectic is oriented towards transcendence which is vested in Transcendent Being. This Transcendent Being can only be God.

#### FOOTNOTES TO CHAPTER SIX

1. It was, in fact, in this connection (of death) that the English-speaking philosophical community first came into personal contact with the French thinker. Unfortunately, a lack of acquaintance with his peculiar style of self-examination and his non-idealist presentation led to a misapprehension of his address on the sinister possibilities in man's obsession with the thought of death. These factors did not make for a happy encounter. Marcel recalls, with some amusement, how on that occasion the members of the prestigious Oxford Philosophical Society condemned his attitude as reprehensible and shameful. In his defence, Marcel points out that his hearers overlooked the fact that he was not rendering a value judgment but only enunciating the possibility that one's situation could conceivably involve inescapable despair (DH 188, Schg 59; cf. EPC 114).
2. Marcel himself has likened life to a lottery : I am handed a ticket, which is in effect my death sentence, on which the date, place and manner of my death are left blank (EPC 210-212, ST 182). This ineluctable process of dying, common to all finite creatures, is set in motion from birth so that, as Rilke has expressed it, our life and death keep pace with each other in growth and maturity (R.M. Rilke, Die Aufzeichnungen des Malte Laurids Brigge, Zürich, 1948, pp. 13-14).
3. PI 65. cf. ST 208 : "Triomphe du Mal - triomphe de la Mort - triomphe du Désespoir : ce sont en vérité les modalités diverses d'une possibilité unique et redoutable qui s'inscrit à l'horizon de l'Homo Viator, de l'homme acheminant sur cette voie très étroite qui est la sienne, le "chemin de crête" entre les gouffres."
4. Heidegger himself recognizes this : "Das Sein zum Tode ist wesenschaft Angst" (Sein und Zeit - originally published in Jahrbuch für Philosophie und phänomenologische Forschung, VIII, pp. 1-438, Halle, 1927 - pp. 265-266, quoted HV 332. Marcel is only too aware of the inadequacies of language, especially in translating from the original. In ST 175-181, repeated in Schg 61, he attempts a linguistic analysis of Heidegger's terminology as represented by "Ein existenzielles Sein zum Tode" (SZ 245 Ff), "Ganzheit" (SZ 233-234, 372-373), and "Freiheit zum Tode" (SZ 266, 309-311, 326-327). Of the first he notes that the preposition "zu" cannot be adequately translated into French, either by "pour" (which connotes a practical purpose or condemnation) or by "vers" (which presupposes a verb of motion, which "être" is not). Heidegger's "Ganzheit" cannot be equated with Marcel's "Plérôme". The Heideggerian expression is ambiguous, according to Marcel; it implies the notion of completion ("complétude" as Marcel calls it) which could

finish at death whereas Marcel's "plérôme" belongs to the "other kingdom" or, presumably, eternity (cf. Chapter 4, fn 1). As will be seen in the continuing script, Marcel runs into difficulties on the score of death as an "event" or not. Again, "Freiheit zum Tode" is charged with ambiguity, he says, for the same reason as "Sein zum Tode"; the preposition "zu" would seem to denote "destined for". Marcel's own views of the role of freedom is considered shortly, in section iii of this first part of the chapter. For Marcel, death does not change the interior completeness as implied by Heidegger. Rather, death can be considered a termination only when viewed from the "outside", when I detach myself from my body. J.M. Demske summarises Heidegger's dialectic as follows: "The being of Dasein turns out to be concern, the meaning of which consists in the three-dimensional structured temporality. The concrete expressions of the three time dimensions are death (future), guilt (past), and situation (present), all of which are to be understood existentially and ontologically. Death as the existential of totality, the extreme and all-embracing power-to-be of Dasein, represents the fullness of the entire structure, so that it contains the full implications of the finitude of Dasein" (Being, Man & Death, p. 179).

5. PI 65, 58.
6. Frederick Copleston, Contemporary Philosophy, pp. 205-206 : "The death of someone who is dear to someone who is dear to me may obviously affect me deeply; but preoccupation with my own death naturally tends to appear to me as something disordered, something "morbid," as a dereliction of duty, a withdrawal from society and a retreat from the proper discharge of my social function... As a member of society, I look on finitude and death in a social perspective... The existentialist, it seems to me, changes or tries to change the perspective in which we see certain facts of which we are already aware. He directs my attention to limits which are normally marginal to my consciousness and focuses my gaze on my finitude, on my limitations, on my death as the extinction of my possibilities. .. He .. tries to make me focus my attention on the fundamental existential situation of the human individual as such, a free finite being, condemned, as it were, to act in the world and to commit himself in the world, and then to perish."
7. PACMO 79. cf. EA I 115, 119-120, 137-138, 148-149, 154-155, PI 152, 280 (l'Insondable). For Christians and for those who believe in an after-life, the game of life is no less a waiting game. "Our time is a time of waiting; waiting is its special destiny. Time itself is waiting, waiting not for another time, but for that which is eternal" (P. Tillich, The Shaking of the Foundations, 154).
8. ... who was now his step-mother, although Marcel has never referred to her as such.
9. DH 43, PE 113, PI 133, 182, ST 41, 186. The only plays in which death does not feature prominently (apart from his comedies) are le Palais de sable, le Coeur des autres, Croissez et multipliez and la Prune et la prune. cf. Appendix 2, IV.
10. Marcel wondered, for example, if dreams could be a sort of rehearsal for the "interior transmigration" to which he thought of reducing death. Moreover, he says, the dream may become spontaneously prophetic at a certain depth when the sleeper passes into a consciousness of another type, on another scale, and participates in its life, without entering into communication with it (JM 248).
11. ME II 147.
12. ME I 114.

13. EA I 129. cf. EPC 257-258, DH 187. This is a Romantic view, later espoused by Sartre and his followers, and is expressed succinctly by Byron :
 

"At last men came to set me free;  
 I ask'd not why, and reck'd not where;  
 It was at length the same to me,  
 Fetter'd or fetterless to be,  
I learn'd to love despair."

~ George Gordon, Lord Byron, The Prisoner of Chillon, lines 370-374, (from Byron's Poetical Works, vol. III, London, Murray, 1879). The emphases are mine. cf. the expression of Eustache Soreau : "J'aspire au sordide comme à une délivrance" (le Dard 106).
14. PI 73.
15. See above, fn 4 of this chapter.
16. Schg 60. cf. ST 73-74.
17. Schg 62, 67. This phrase is not particularly satisfactory. What Marcel seems to be saying is that, in order to understand the mystery of death, we need to be aware of the relationship between myself and my body.
18. ST 184.
19. EA I 12. cf. JM 199. Marcel notes that in trying to think of "my" death, he is breaking the rules of the (philosophical) game. To consider my body as a mechanism is to consider it as an instrument for my use or disposal. This attitude would justify suicide, murder, and such forms of homicide as abortion and euthanasia (cf. PACMO 48, HV 116, 136-137). As has been noted in Chapter 1 (p.23), in Marcel's dialectic I am my body; it is not even just the instrument for my soul. Any notion of death as the destruction of the body as a receptive instrument of messages involves the negation of a life which is only maintained through the interchange of messages.
20. Schg 57.
21. JM 235-236. Here we run up against the lingering conception of the body as instrument. Beings who are insensitive to one another could not communicate, but they are not necessarily dead. Death is not the cessation or "suppression" of feelings but a transformation in the mode of feeling. The instrumental mediation of the body in the dimensions of knowledge and awareness of one's situation as being-in-the-world is necessary for what Marcel called at first "sympathetic mediation". This sympathetic mediation is apparently the means of intercommunication between kindred spirits as souls, that is as the essence of their individual beings. The notion of "sympathetic mediation" evolved into that of "presence".
22. J. Middleton Murry, Not as the Scribes : lay sermons (London, SCM, 1959), 174. cf. JM 245.
23. See above, fn 21 of this chapter.
24. But see his further comments on resurrection, pp. 181, 191-192.
25. Death appears to involve absence, loss and suffering, if it is considered naturalistically and from the standpoint of "having". But within the positive metaphysical structure, Marcel suggests, death is seen as the great test of presence, fidelity, hope and love. Because he points out that a phenomenological consideration of death as absolute is a denial of the possibility of looking beyond the immediate, Marcel wonders if such a representation of death is compatible with a hyper-phenomenological position of immortality which, while including such quasi-theological concepts as grace, is yet possible in the philosophical context (PI 39-40, Schg 55; cf. EPC 121-123).

26. FP 82-83. cf. FP 84 : "Pour la foi ... la mort n'est pas. 'O Mort, où est ta victoire?" See Chapter 4, fn 63.
27. JM 40 (Chapter 4, p. 109).
28. EPC 120.
29. JM 202. cf. JM 177, ME II 46, ST 95. See Chapter 1, p. 27.
30. I John 4 : 8, EA I 99. See Chapter 5, p. 160. cf. P. Tillich : "Death is given power over everything finite, but death is given no power over love. Love is stronger. It creates something new out of the destruction caused by death" (The New Being, London, SCM, 1963, pp. 173-174).
31. EA I 115. cf. PACMO 70.
32. EA I 111 n. Emphasis mine to show the connection, in Marcel's view, of immortality and religious belief.
33. EA I 112 n. While we may infer that the identification of soul as belonging to the level of being is an admission of the place of God in Marcel's ontology, we must point out that Marcel is really playing with words - as existentialist thinkers seem to do - when he speaks of "loss" and "perdition" (perte and perdition).
34. EA I 113 n.
35. He asserts that his attitude to his own death becomes more intelligible when he considers his attitude to the death of others, particularly of those he loves (Schg 62). This is another way of expressing his proposed option. It was this attitude, which he presented at the 1937 International Philosophical Congress in Paris, which led to what he styles as "la controverse brève mais profondément significative" between himself and Léon Brunschvicg. The latter accused Marcel (very courteously) of laying much more stress on the fact of his own death than Brunschvicg would put on his. Marcel replied that the correct setting of the question was different : it is the death of the beloved which preoccupies Marcel. cf. HV 194, EPC 227-228, ME II 152, PI 182, ST 190-191, Schg 67-68.
36. MdD 161, quoted HV 194 and ME II 154. The character in question, Jeanne Framont is, however, not expressing herself with quite the motive which Marcel sees as the "correct" one. Jeanne is referring to her husband whom she wishes to retain, like a possession, against the fear that he will surely die if he returns to the battlefield. See Appendix 2, IV, pp. 232, 235.
37. EA I 121. cf. HCH 54, ME II 149.
38. PI 59-60.
39. PI 62-63, cf. PI 68-69, 131, 151-152, PACMO 79. See Appendix 2, IV, for examples of pseudo-fidelity from Marcel's theatre, pp. 235-237.
40. cf. Chapter 1, p. 15.
41. PACMO 79-81, Schg 63-64. The passage quoted is from PACMO 80-81.
42. See above, pp. 174-175, 177-178.
43. Le Fanal 39-40.
44. Le Fanal 62.
45. SC 175. For a fuller treatment of this play, see Chapter 5, pp. 148-149. Werner Schnee, in le Dard, promises the same abiding presence to sustain Béatrice (le Dard 117-118).
46. PI 152.

47. MTNPLV 154. cf. HdD 140-141. In Un Homme de Dieu Claude reveals, also regretfully, to Osmonde that he is not her father. The contrast in the reactions of the two girls is that while Marie-Henriette is drawn closer to her father, Osmonde eventually rejects Claude. See Appendix 2, I.
48. MTNPLV 178-179. Shortly after, he says of the world: "Les personnages eux-mêmes se disloquent: voici le temps des phantasmes" (181). We are reminded (by Marcel) of a phrase from Gerhardt Hauptmann's work, Michael Kramer: "Death, the most merciful form of life." This phrase, quoted in Rilke's Stundenbuch (19 Dec. 1900), is cited also by Marcel, HV 293. Champel would appear to be presented by Marcel as the type-character rather similar to Besme in Claudel's La Ville and more familiar as the hero in the works of Camus, in particular. cf. PACMO 52, EPC 257, HV 347-369, ST 83.
49. MTNPLV 193. Marie-Henriette resembles Sylvie Ferrier in her sympathetic attitude to her father (l'Emissaire, SdI 166, see Appendix 2, III A). Like Simon Bernauer (SC) and Pascal Laumière (RPR), she too will shortly be rewarded by being given a light to enlighten her on the way to true fidelity.
50. MTNPLV 198.
51. MTNPLV 216.
52. L'Iconoclaste 46. For the character of Aline, see Chapter 5, p. 146. and Appendix 2, IV.
53. EA I 97-98, 101, 135, 161, EPC 121.
54. ME I 180-182. cf. St Paul, I Corinthians 4 : 10, HdD 138. Our lives should be creative if we are to make use of our freedom but, Marcel argues, no life is really creative except to the degree that it is consecrated. It is from this consecration that the gift of one's life can be truly possible since the gift itself realizes one more step on the way to consecration (PI 37; cf. Chapter 1, p. 20). In this way, for example, religious life of its consecrated nature is a continuous, life-long martyrdom and in this respect martyrdom assumes its primal meaning of witness. But the authentic being, whether consecrated to religious life or not, is no less a witness; he bears testimony to the ontological communion and so is consecrated to Being, to God. The consecrated people, Marcel affirms, are the most available because the consecrated person has renounced himself (EA I 154, 158) in the interests of another, or of a cause, or of God.
55. Saint Clement of Alexandria, Stromateis, I, iv (PG 8, 1227) :  
 Αὐτίκα 'τελειωσιν' τὸ μαρτύριον καλοῦμεν, οὐχ ὅτι 'τέλος' τοῦ βίου ὁ ἄνθρωπος ἔλαθεν, ὡς ἄλοιποὶ ἀλλ' ὅτι 'τελειον' ἔργον ἀγάπης ἐνεδείξατο.  
 cf. ME II 50-51 where Marcel considers the notions of the theologians concerning perfection and of the "ancients" concerning the nature of τέλειον as distinct. It would seem that he is not familiar with Clement's "existential" interpretation as given.
56. EPC 121.
57. EA I 155.
58. PI 38.
59. RPR 22.
60. ME II 178, JM 230. cf. EA II 74-75.
61. ST 73. cf. Schg 39.
62. EPC 259.

63. PI 105.
64. Les Coeurs avides 151.
65. See Chapter 5, p. 161.
66. SdI 269.
67. ST 190.
68. EPC 228. cf. PI 105 (fn 63 above). Besides the examples of Werner Schnee, Simon Bernauer and others already noted of hope in abiding presence, compare that of Stella Chartrain in les Coeurs avides. While she does not have the strong faith of her brother Arnaud who has God watching over him (92) — and who appears indifferent to those who do not have a divine protector — she nevertheless needs the assurance of a like protection and believes that her step-mother, Eveline, has been sent by her (Stella's) mother. "Eveline, j'ai été sûre que c'était maman qui me t'envoyait. Je me suis crue gardée ... Je pense que je ne peux vivre si je n'ai pas le sentiment qu'on veille sur moi. Pas Dieu; je ne suis pas comme Arnaud" (les Coeurs avides 91-92).
69. cf. Pascal Laumière in Rome n'est plus dans Rome who confesses : "C'est terrible, Esther, cette lumière qui ne nous éclaire sur les êtres que lorsqu'ils sont morts" (RPR 126). We may take from Scripture the example of the Apostles who did not really know Christ until after his Ascension when they were infused with the Spirit of Wisdom.
70. PI 228. See Appendix 2, IV, p. 234. cf. I John 3 : 14, "We know that we have passed out of death into life, because we love our brothers. He who does not love remains in death."
71. FP 85. cf. FP 84-88, Schg 70.
72. JM 235-236. See above, fn 21 of this chapter. Marcel seems to imply that he, at least, believes in "life after death" when he says, somewhat enigmatically, "... si pour des motifs d'ordre au fond religieux, ou plutôt en lesquels s'exprime une religion retournée, j'en viens à proclamer qu'il n'y a pas de vie après la mort, je serai presque fatalement amené à déprécier ou à dévaloriser une existence qui débouche sur le non-sens absolu de la dissolution" (EPC 144-145). But he does not give any indication of what kind this after-life will be.
73. PI 35, 132, Schg 70. cf. JM 132-133.
74. ME II 156. cf. FP 82-84.
75. ME II 173.
76. ME II 178, HV 194, "Some Reflections on Existentialism" in Philosophy Today, vol. 8, 4/4, (1964).
77. In a letter, dated 2 June 1951, to Troisfontaines (cited TM II 300), Marcel affirms : "Le fait de la Résurrection de Notre-Seigneur conserve pour moi une primauté absolue. De tout moi-même, je m'associe à la parole de St Paul: 'si le Christ n'est pas ressuscité notre foi est vaine'. J'ai horreur de toutes les tentatives qui ont pu être faites du côté d'un certain protestantisme, d'ailleurs dégradé et infidèle à ses origines, pour aménager un christianisme où la Résurrection ne serait plus que symbole, c'est-à-dire fonction." cf. RPR 43. Troisfontaines goes on to mention that Marcel had quoted Schelling in an article on "Jugement par l'Histoire et Jugement sur l'Histoire" to assert that the promise of resurrection is the soul of history (which latter term has nothing in common with that used by the Hegelians).



78. The Resurrection is more than a symbol of hope, it is the guarantee of our hope and at the same time dissipates man's natural fear of death. (Even Christ in Gethsemane was overwhelmed by natural fear.) Our fear of death is a heritage of sin which has entered the world (cf. ME II 182). We fear, not so much because we have to die as because we deserve to die. Yet there is a correlation between sin and salvation; it is through the consciousness of sin opening out upon that of a necessary Recourse, that salvation is possible. This we can realize when we become aware that our condition as sinners binds us together in a communion of appeal to the Absolute Thou (PI 85, 87).
79. TR 93-94. See Chapter 1, p. 15.
80. "Structure de l'Espérance", loc. cit., 80 : "Il n'y a d'espérance qu'en la résurrection; en même temps que la résurrection ne peut être donné qu'en espérance."
81. G. Marcel, source not given, cited TM II 170.
82. cf. ME II 183-184.
83. See Appendix 2, III B.
84. ME II 183. cf. RPR 92, 122. Marcel is probably referring to Gregory's De Virginitate (PG 46) in which the Cappadocian mystic (and "Christian Platonist") proposes his three stages of ascent (liberty, gnosis and theoria) of the Christian soul to God. It would be interesting to see the coincidence of Plato's imagery of the ascent of the soul to the Form of the Beautiful, Gregory's three stages to God, and Marcel's three levels of participation in ontological communion. It may also be that Gregory appeals to Marcel on account of his life and retiring disposition. Gregory was no "philosopher of congresses". See Christology of the Later Fathers, vol. III of The Library of Christian Classics, London, SCM, 1954, pp. 236-240.
85. HV 190. cf. EPC 121, RPR 146.
86. PACMO 85. These "heroes of the spiritual life", as Bergson called them, did not withdraw from reality. Rather, by the total consecration of their existence to Being, they witnessed to the intensity of the radiated Presence which is experienced Reality. So it was that Christ had to disappear according to the flesh so that his Apostles could find him again, more fully and ever abiding, according to the Spirit.
87. cf. JM 5-6, 47, 60, 73, 83, 218, EA I 22, EPC 91, 219, ME II 116.
88. ME II 188.
89. M. Pontifex and I. Trethowan, The Meaning of Existence, 152-153.
90. See Chapter 1, p. 18.
91. See Chapter 1, pp. 18-20.
92. See Chapter 4, pp. 104-106.
93. PACMO 63. See Chapter 2, p. 56.
94. EPC 19. See Chapter 1, fn 119, p. 39, Chapter 3, fn 83, p. 100, Chapter 5, p. 163.
95. ME II 171.
96. EA I 66. cf. EA I 153, see Chapter 1, p. 28, and EA I 55 : "Il n'y a pas d'engagement purement gratuit, c'est-à-dire qui n'implique une certaine prise de l'être sur nous", see Chapter 4, p. 125.
97. FP 105-106. See Chapter 4, pp. 106-107, and 127 (fnn 8 and 9).
98. EPC 205. See Chapter 4, p. 111.
99. JM 40. See Chapter 4, p. 109.

100. JM 137. See Chapter 4, p. 125. cf. ME II 20. See Chapter 1, fn 124, p. 40.
101. EA I 55. See Chapter 5, p. 143.
102. JM 202. cf. JM 177. See above in the present chapter, p. 180.
103. DH 121. See Chapter 5, p. 161.
104. EA I 99. See Chapter 5, p. 161.
105. JM 63. See Chapter 5, p. 160.
106. HV 200. See Chapter 1, p. 25.
107. HCH 141. See Chapter 5, p. 164.
108. See above in the present chapter, p. 190.

## CONCLUSION

La théorie de la participation à l'être dont nous avons reconnus des éléments importants chez Royce et qui se précisera chez W.E. Hocking permet de dépasser les alternatives que nous venons de définir en ce qu'elle s'oriente vers la rupture définitive avec des catégories inadéquates à l'objet propre de la métaphysique et vers une interprétation moins systématique, mais plus fidèle et plus profonde de la vie spirituelle: une philosophie de ce type, renonçant à exiger du réel des garanties qui se changent inévitablement en contraintes, tend à reconnaître expressément un ordre de la liberté et de l'amour où les rapports d'être à être, loin de s'intégrer en un système rationnel unique qui après tout ne sera jamais qu'une nature, demeureront les expressions d'individualités solidaires et distinctes qui participent à Dieu dans la mesure même où elles croient en lui.

- G. MARCEL, La Métaphysique de Royce, 223-224.

In final analysis, Gabriel Marcel's whole thought is to be understood as having its axis in a renewed "applied theocentrism". It is on this score that his general metaphysics is seen to be oriented towards the recognition and affirmation of God. His dialectic is based on principles similar to those which were used as criteria by the Christian pre-Renaissance thinkers. Marcel defends the alleged "ridiculous anthropocentric attitude" of Augustine, Aquinas and Bonaventure, for example, as being precisely an "applied theocentrism" which is, in his view, of greater ontological value than what he describes as the modern dehumanized "anthropocentrism" of "applied technolatriy".<sup>1</sup> At least for those earlier, Christian, thinkers God alone is the centre towards which all thought and knowledge is to be directed. The theocentrism in Marcel's thought is based on the identification of Being as the Power of Creativity. There is also the fundamental recognition by the "authentic" existent of his status as creature, an awareness which presupposes the affirmation of a Creator.

Creation, it has been observed, is the touchstone of medieval metaphysics<sup>2</sup>, and the same criterion can be applied to Marcel's contemporary metaphysics. One of his more recent commentators, Widmer, has expressed reservations about a lacuna, as he sees it, in Marcel's affirmation of God. This, Widmer claims, is that "Marcel n'arrive pas suffisamment à établir la création sur le plan de la raison."<sup>3</sup> Widmer has grounds for this objection if, by establishing creation on the plane of reason, he means a rational exposition of God's creative influence on the universe and all things in it which have being and existence. But Widmer seems to forget that any kind of "objective" presentation of a Divine Cause after the mode of the traditional philosopher-theologians is foreign to Marcel's adopted manner of thinking. A lack of schematic orderliness in a philosopher may well be a deficiency but, in Marcel's case at least, it does not follow that he is any less intelligible in what he means by creation. Marcel does recognize, at least implicitly, the truth of Creation :

La connaissance d'un être individuel n'est pas séparable de l'acte d'amour ou de charité par lequel cet être est posé dans ce qui le constitue comme créature unique, ou si l'on veut, comme image de Dieu. (4)

Tout ce qu'on peut se proposer, c'est peut-être en dernière analyse d'éveiller chez l'autre la conscience de ce qu'il est, disons pour préciser, de sa filiation divine, lui apprendre à se reconnaître comme enfant de Dieu à travers l'amour qui lui est témoigné. (5)

L'amour de l'être ne présente-t-il pas toujours un caractère révérentiel? N'est-ce pas l'amour du créé en tant qu'expression voilée ou que gage de la présence du créateur? (6)

The whole notion of creation as it affects man in his tripartite relationship (with self, others, God) is essentially integral to Marcel's whole concept of the being-becoming of man.

Creativity (man's participation in creation) is the mainspring of Marcel's metaphysics of being. Not only must life be dynamic but also thought must be creative if it is not to lapse into abstraction for want of "vital tension".<sup>7</sup> We have already noted Marcel's important statement that as soon as there is creation, in whatever degree, we are in the realm of being so that we cannot really talk of "being" except where creation (and therefore, we infer, the Creator) is involved.<sup>8</sup>

It is on this premiss that his argument for a "positive" option with regard to life is based. It is, he claims, in the eternal source of creation that we shall discover a sense of a certain fundamental reverence towards life. This recognition of not only the meaningfulness of life but of its "sacral" character derives from an affirmation

qui va bien au-delà de toutes les modalités empiriques et objectivement discernables de la vie, (et qui) peut non seulement conférer son sens plénier, mais apposer le sceau de l'éternité à l'acte de création perpétuellement renouvelé. (9)

It is, Marcel affirms, only through a theocentric perspective that we may discover the "sacral" qualities of life, particularly those of consecration and service.<sup>10</sup> If instead we treat life, not as a gift, but as a power to be controlled, Marcel warns that we can too easily succumb to a pessimistic, and hence desacralized, attitude to our life and existence. It is not a question of power, but of love.<sup>11</sup> The key to the questions of suffering and evil, of perpetuated fidelity after death is love. Marcel concludes that man's ultimate self-fulfilment will only be completed in the plenitude of being which is itself the ground and locus of our relationships with God.<sup>12</sup> This realization (in both the cognitive and volitional senses of the word) can only be effected with the freely accorded recognition of God as the Source of the unity, community, and continuity of our interpersonal (i.e. intersubjective) love.

The whole presentation of Marcel's ontology can therefore be rendered intelligible as existential theism. We have by now established that the place of God is central in Marcel's thought; his whole dialectic of creative participation is "une théocentrisme appliqué". We can likewise conclude that God must be identifiable with Being, as both terms are understood by Marcel. This does not mean, however, that God-Being is to be construed as a "theoretical construct". Marcel is not interested in answering the question "What is God like?" But while he may claim that he has no time for any doctrine of analogy by attribution he does in fact postulate an "analogy of presentiality" and uses the terms "Absolute Thou" and "Absolute Recourse" in speaking of God.<sup>13</sup> At best we may say that Marcel prefers not to get lost in a proliferation of attributes.

As far as Gabriel Marcel is concerned, God is a very personal God; God is the Absolute Thou who is ever-present to those who choose to believe in Him.

Marcel would probably deny vehemently that he is advancing anything like an "existential ontological argument" for God's "existence". But it does seem that, from his insistence on man's recognition of self as creature "made in the image of God" and from his phenomenological descriptions of the relations of the "I" and the "thou" as mirroring the relations of the "I" and the "(Absolute) Thou", Marcel's approach could be construed as a variation of the cosmological argument for the reality of God.

The necessary precondition to the adoption of Marcel's metaphysical option is faith. It is only in the light of faith, the recognition and acknowledgment of God as Creator, and as the Absolute Thou who is the cement of all intersubjective relations, that Marcel's interpretation of ontology makes sense. Metaphysics, for Marcel, begins with the recognition of mystery in being;<sup>14</sup> it leads, not to the solution of mystery, but to the awareness of the transcendental orientation of participative man and therefore of Transcendent Being. Faith, then, is at the root of Marcel's dialectic; despite his convoluted reasoning about the interconnection of freedom-grace-disponibilité, the fundamental option is revealed as the choice to believe or not to believe.

This, then, is the desired result of "conversion" as stipulated by Marcel. But, despite his avowal that this "conversion" is of a philosophical kind,<sup>15</sup> it can only be understood as both intelligible and efficacious within a religious context. Certainly, on the initial level, Marcel advocates a "conversion" from egocentrism to availability, from the "closed" attitudes of the self (moi) and of primary reflection (pensée pensée) to the "openness" of intersubjectivity ("I-thou" relationship) and secondary reflection (pensée pensante). But, in the light of the religious element in Marcel's thought, this conversion must be seen as the first step, the "fore-shadowing" as it were, to that religious conversion which was his own experience. Mention has been made of the rather excessive religious element in Marcel's writings, and how Marcel recognizes that, from a Christian standpoint, his philosophical propositions are more meaningful.<sup>16</sup> In reality, however, the conversion which Marcel would like to see effected in his readers is a conversion to his way of thinking. But since he recognizes freedom as the fundamental existential value, he realizes that his way may not be acceptable to all. Accordingly, his dialectic is tainted occasionally by a measure of elitism and this is particularly noticeable in his key term of presence<sup>17</sup> upon which depends his "presential analogy" of the reality of God.

Gabriel Marcel has much of value to say about man's existential situation. He provides valuable insights into the ways and means of improving man's self-knowledge and his relations with his fellow-existents. But we have to conclude that, when he addresses himself to the important matter of man's relations with God, whom he places at the centre of his metaphysics, he attempts to "wed" philosophy and theology, and satisfies the requirements of neither. He holds his place as an important "philosopher of existence" but he is not a success as a "religious philosopher" or as a "philosophical theologian".

#### FOOTNOTES TO THE CONCLUSION

1. EA II 18. Furthermore, in Marcel's view, Kant's "Copernican revolution" in philosophy degenerated for many into an anthropocentrism where pride dominates and reason is not counterbalanced by the theocentric affirmation. A propos Kant, we may observe that, while Marcel seems to base his rejection of Anselm's "ontological argument" on Kant's criticism, he himself became dissatisfied at an early stage with Kant's "transcendental idealism" (cf. JM 207). Nevertheless, he seems to have accepted the Kantian position as a starting-point for his investigations into man's degree and scope of apperception. However, on the other hand, he does not follow Kant too closely. For example, he does not accept Kant's distinction between phenomenon and "noumenon" (Ding-an-sich). cf. JM 315-316, ME II 155. Rather, Marcel appears to agree with Heidegger, who is more explicit, in his interpretation of "phenomenon". Heidegger (Sein und Zeit, loc. cit., 27-31) does not accept Kant's interpretation of phenomenon in the sense of appearance contrasted with the thing-in-itself; he understands phenomenon in the original Greek sense of something coming into view, showing itself, and emerging into the light. cf. ME I 103. We may say that Marcel preferred to elaborate his own "concrete" philosophy of a "realist" type, leaving the adaptation of Kantian transcendental idealism to Joseph Maréchal whose first volume of Le point de départ de la métaphysique (1927) heralded what was to become "transcendental Thomism", anyway.
2. W.E. Carlo, op. cit., 18, 81.
3. Ch. Widmer, Gabriel Marcel et le théisme existentiel, 228.
4. HV 28. He adds immediately : "cette expression empruntée au langage religieux est sans doute celle qui traduit le plus exactement la vérité que j'ai en vue en ce moment" (HV 28-29). cf. EPC 222 : "Le rapport à Dieu, la position de la transcendance divine permettent seuls de penser l'individualité; ceci veut dire non pas seulement que l'individu se réalise lui-même comme individu en se posant comme créature, mais encore que, par la médiation du croyant, ceux-là mêmes qui restent dominés par ce que Claudel a appelé l'esprit de la terre peuvent graduellement assumer peut-être une individualité." (Emphasis mine.) cf. also EPC 173, 178, 180, ME II 119, HCH 54, TM II 46.

5. HV 211. Marcel adds : "De ce point de vue je serais assez tenté de dire que, contrairement à ce qu'a proclamé Kierkegaard, il existe probablement une maïeutique chrétienne, mais dont l'essence est bien entendu très différente de celle que présente une maïeutique platonicienne : c'est en traitant l'autre comme enfant de Dieu que je peux, me semble-t-il, à la limite, éveiller en lui la conscience de sa filiation divine. Mais en réalité je ne lui donne rien, je ne lui apporte rien; je me borne à reporter sur cette créature qui originellement ignore sa vraie nature, et il l'ignore même d'autant plus qu'elle se complaît plus vaniteusement en elle-même, - et cette adoration dont Dieu évoqué dans sa Vie est l'objet unique" (HV 211-212). cf. Schg 48.
6. ME I 84. For references in the script to man's ontological status as creature, see Chapter 1, pp. 12, 20, 29; Chapter 2, pp. 43, 51; Chapter 4, p. 107; Chapter 5, p. 140.
7. Ms XV (1912-1913), quoted by L.A. Blain, art. cit., loc. cit., 187.
8. EA I 88, Foreword to Gallagher's work, xiii. See Chapter 1, p. 27 and fn 120 (Geiger's objection), pp. 39-40.
9. HV 124. Closely associated with this renewal of the appreciation of the "sacral" element of life is its "authentic" response (by the individual, of course) in commitment by what Marcel calls the "voeu créateur". This "voeu", as has been noted (Chapter 5, pp. 145, 158), is carnally rooted in the eternity of God and is animated by a strong hope for ultimate realization in "l'unité supraconsciente et suprahistorique de tous en tous - cette unité en laquelle seule la création peut trouver son sens plénier" (HV 159-160). cf. "Theism and Personal Relationships", loc. cit., 35-42 and EPC 249-250 where Marcel notes that the ground of our fidelity is based on a certain appeal delivered from the depths of our own insufficiency to the "highest" (*ad summam altitudinem*) - who, we can only infer, is God. This appeal, which is characterized by humility, is an act of hope whereby I extend an infinite credit to God as Absolute Thou. Our fidelity is not so much based on a distinct apprehension of God as someone other; it is the highest level of the I-thou relationships.
10. Schg 49, EA I 23.
11. EPC 155.
12. "Theism and Person Relationships", loc. cit., 37-42. cf. PI 89 : "Dieu étant le lieu d'une communion infinie."
13. For comments on the possibility of God as a "theoretical construct", see J. Richmond, *Theology and Metaphysics*, pp. 147-148; on "analogy of attribution", see E.L. Mascall, *The Openness of Being*, p. 33; for Marcel's "analogy of presentiality", see pp. 81-84, 91-92; for references to God as "Absolute Thou" see pp. 11, 24, 52, 60, 81, 86, 87, 89, 94, 112, 115, 119, 143, 145, 158-159.
14. The recognition of mystery against problem in philosophical enquiry is involved in Marcel's option of "meaningfulness" against "absurdisme". Perhaps he would agree with Daly's pronouncement : "The true alternative is not mystery or clarity, but mystery or absurdity" (C.B. Daly, "Metaphysics and the Limits of Language" in *Prospect for Metaphysics*, ed. I. Ramsey, London, 1961, p. 204).
15. See Chapter 1, p. 19 and Chapter 2, pp. 46-47.
16. EPC 124-125. He adds that while the recognition of the ontological mystery does not of necessity imply the adherence to any religious persuasion, "une telle philosophie [of the "concrete"] se porte ... d'un mouvement irrésistible à la rencontre d'une lumière qu'elle pressent et dont elle subit au fond de soi la stimulation secrète et comme la brûlure prévenante" (PACMO 91). His own preference is marked when he



asserts that the "concrete" response of the authentic existent is acceptance, because the a-religious man is "un homme de refus" (HCH 196). The religious man, he who "accepts", can yet retain his inviolable freedom and will be led, Marcel suggests, to realize that he belongs to God who is his Absolute Thou and Indefectible Resort. God is not to be considered as a Power in the sense of Efficient Cause but as Freedom addressing Himself to the existent as freedom. "Non seulement," Marcel prays, "Tu es liberté, mais Tu me veux, Tu me suscites moi aussi comme liberté. Tu m'appelles à me créer, Tu es cet appel même. Et si je me refuse à lui, c'est-à-dire à Toi, si je m'obstine à déclarer que je n'appartiens qu'à moi-même, c'est pour autant comme je me murais; c'est comme si je m'attachais à étrangler de mes mains cette réalité au nom de laquelle je crois Te résister" (EPC 155). That passage, by itself, is an indication of the theocentrism evident in Marcel. But for all its lyrical quality and strong personal belief, it can hardly be called a philosophical affirmation which can pass unchallenged by other philosophers. It is on account of that, and the bland quasi-theological, semi-mystical statements of its kind, that I present my conclusion in the final paragraph (p. 209).

17. See Chapter 4, fn 23, p. 129. cf. Chapter 1, pp. 15, 34 (fn 55); Chapter 2; p. 50, Chapter 3, pp. 84, 92; Chapter 4, p. 110; Chapter 6, p. 184.

## APPENDIX 1

MARCEL,AQUINAS AND AUGUSTINE

For all the speculative mysticism imputed to him by Etienne Gilson<sup>1</sup>, Gabriel Marcel strives to restrict his activity to philosophy. But his avowed determination not to transgress into a domain (theology) where he claims no competence can only remain an ideal. Reality dictates otherwise if his dialectic is to be so closely associated with the tenets of Christian belief. Marcel hopes to distinguish the rôles of the philosopher and theologian in much the same way as the great medieval thinkers. We have already concluded that his attempt produces an unsatisfactory compromise. Marcel, however, considers that his philosophy is situated at a juncture of Aristotle and Plato.<sup>2</sup> In the course of the thesis occasional reference has been made to interesting parallels in his thought and that of both Aquinas and Augustine who may be taken as the Christian "interpreters" of Aristotle and Plato, respectively.

A. Marcel and Aquinas

Hoc nomen, qui est, ... est maxime proprium nomen Dei.  
Non enim significat formam aliquam, sed ipsum esse.  
Unde cum esse Dei sit ipsa ejus essentia, et hoc nulli  
alii conveniat, manifestum est quod inter alia nomina  
hoc maxime proprie nominat Deum. (3)

Marcel de Corte<sup>4</sup> instances as Marcel's "Christian Aristotelianism": 1) his studies of the body-soul relationship, 2) his refusal to identify reception and passivity, 3) his renunciation of any arbitrary cleavage between the "vital" and the "intellectual", 4) "l'inaltérable confiance dans la vie conçue non point comme un agent naturel, mais comme une économie insondable et divine en son principe",<sup>5</sup> 5) his wonderment before "being"<sup>6</sup>, and 6) his refusal to substitute the idea for the real, the abstract for the concrete. But, faced with this catalogue, we should not immediately declare any secret affinity of Marcel and Aquinas. The French thinker's dismissal of Aquinas's prime concept of divine causality should be sufficient to discourage such a notion of complete harmony.

Marcel's realism is more Aristotelian than Thomist.<sup>7</sup> While he agrees that thought is made for being, and that the judgment of existence is the most properly metaphysical judgment, he nevertheless wonders whether intellect should not be considered as a mode of being.

Marcel will not subscribe to the Thomist principle of self-identity unless Being is distinguishable from the Anaximandrian ἄπειρον . But if the ἄπειρον is unthinkable, and Marcel holds that it is, the principle of identity is inapplicable : it ceases to apply once thought itself can no longer work.<sup>8</sup> Marcel suggests that, if the principle of identity is to be made compatible with the identity of Being, there is the possibility for it to be made the principle of a finite (i.e. determinate) world. There can still be the possibility of a transcendent thought which "overleaps" the finite world and is therefore not subject to the principle of identity. A second possibility would be to deny the first and admit that there is no thought except in the finite order; the indeterminate and the infinite would then be identified as one. A third possibility would be to refuse the second and separate the infinite and the indeterminate so as to affirm the existence of an absolute structure which would be at the same time an absolute life; and this could be identified as the ens realissimum. This last solution, Marcel claims, is that adopted by the Thomists. He rejects their hypothesis since, as Kant has shown to Marcel's satisfaction, existence (and therefore Being) cannot be considered as a structure; it cannot be a predicate.<sup>9</sup>

Although Marcel disagrees with the Thomists on this matter of the principle of identity, there are other areas in which the thinking of Marcel and Aquinas seems to converge.

(i) Revelation.

Mention has already been made of Marcel's preference for "ontological revelation"<sup>10</sup> which appears to stem from the same source as "theological" revelation. Aquinas argues that revelation was morally necessary in order that man's mind might be raised to higher flights of apperception than man could attain by his own reason. Revelation accelerates man's awareness of God, but it can be received only in the context of finite realities. Marcel appears to follow Kant who says that our knowledge of all ideals is a priori, not prior in time to our knowledge of the real but a precondition of our ability to ascribe to the actual such characters as good and bad. Aquinas affirms that when man makes his first choice in favour of the good he turns to God.<sup>11</sup> There is, then, a connection between revelation and grace in that the first deliberate act of the will, the first of the moral life, in a "positive" (i.e. "good") sense is steeped in the mystery of grace. Marcel agrees, for speaking of the negative act, the choice for sin, he says :

Il semble qu'il soit de l'essence du péché de ne pouvoir être que révélé, c'est-à-dire au fond de n'apparaître qu'à la lumière de la grâce. (12)

God who reveals himself implicitly to the man of good will (he who is dis-ponible) ~ who as yet cannot name God ~ does not oblige him, but draws him to himself. Marcel agrees with Aquinas, therefore, when he asserts that we are drawn towards the Light.<sup>13</sup>

In theological terms, the revelation of God occurs in encounter through a medium capable of acting as an intermediary between God and mankind. The medium serves to point to what is beyond; God is hidden in the very media which reveal him. Christian theologians belong to two schools of thought concerning revelation. The one holds to the mystical view : that God is known immediately, that his existence and activity can be known only by a spiritual insight (granted by divine revelation). The other stands by the rationalistic view as propounded by Aquinas : that the knowledge of God is inferential through analogy, that the knowledge of God is not intuitive.

Marcel himself is wary of both yet appears to use each. He endeavours to synthesize those aspects and elements of each which can be acceptable, in his view, to philosophy. Divine revelation (which is the sense in which the word "revelation" is to be understood in this context) seems to be beyond the competence of philosophy, bearing as it does on theology. Revelation, and the miraculous element which is its correlative, implies a suspension of nature, which is the "suppression" of the dualism of matter and interpretation according to the order of nature.<sup>14</sup> Revelation, Marcel continues, is of the order of grace : it manifests itself only in the light of grace because it transcends the immediate awareness that we may have of it.<sup>15</sup> Marcel's interpretation of the meaning of revelation is eschatological in character, recalling Saint Paul's hope for "the glory that shall be revealed in us".

Je me demande... si la révélation ne porte pas essentielle-ment sur mon insertion dans une communauté infinie, ou encore sur ma dépendance par rapport à Dieu, ce qui revient au même, Dieu étant le lieu d'une communauté infinie. (16)

The ultimate revelation, then, will be the pleromatic communion of Being to which Marcel's philosophy tends and he aspires.<sup>17</sup>

## (ii) Participation.

Through his comments on participation in being as an approach to God ~ apart from faith itself ~ Marcel's dialectic has certain affinities with the gist of what Aquinas has to say about the human intellect, grace, participation, and the primacy of Being. It is useful for our purposes to consider their corresponding statements.

Aquinas says : "It is impossible for any created intellect to see the essence of God by its own natural power. For knowledge is regulated

according as the thing known is in the knower. Hence the knowledge of every knower is ruled according to the mode of its own nature. If therefore the mode of being of a given thing exceeds the mode of the knower, it must follow that the knowledge of that thing is above the nature of the knower. Now the mode of being of things is manifold. For some things have being only in this one individual matter, such are all bodies. There are other beings whose natures are themselves subsisting, not residing in matter at all, which, however, are not their own being, but receive it : and these are the incorporeal beings called angels. But to God alone does it belong to be his own subsistent being... It follows, therefore, that to know self-subsistent being (ipsum esse subsistens) is natural to the divine intellect alone, and that it is beyond the power of any created intellect; for no creature is its own being (esse), since its being is participated. Therefore, a created intellect cannot see the existence of God unless God by his grace unites himself to the created intellect, as an object made intelligible to it."<sup>18</sup>

For his part, Gabriel Marcel had at first considered that if the way to God is by faith and love, and if God is objectively unverifiable, there would appear to be an opposition between knowledge and love, so that faith is a mystery beyond the level of primary reflection.

Nous avons vu que Dieu est au-delà même de l'essence, ce qui revient à dire qu'il n'y a pas à la rigueur de nature divine; mais alors n'en faisons-nous pas un indéterminé? être, n'est-ce pas être quelque chose? ... Je crois qu'il faut reconnaître ce qui est absolument vrai chez Plotin : l'idée de Dieu n'est véritablement pour nous qu'en tant que nous participons à lui. Seulement il importe de transposer dans l'ordre de l'esprit, dans l'ordre subjectif tout ce qui subsiste chez Plotin d'émánatisme objectif. (19)

Faith, according to Marcel, is not an act by which we approximate to a judgment of existence; only if it transcends human knowledge can faith justify itself.<sup>20</sup> During his early enquiries Marcel was unwilling to ascribe existence to God because as yet he had not differentiated between existence and objectivity. To credit God with existence would be to reduce him to an object. Even after he had found his solution to the antinomy of existence and objectivity, Marcel nevertheless maintains his opposition. There is more to being than existence; God does not so much exist, God is.

Just as before his "conversion" to a realist and "concrete" philosophy, so after his religious conversion, faith remains, for Marcel, the only thinkable link between God and his creation.

La seule liaison qu'il soit possible de penser entre Dieu et le monde ne s'établit que dans la foi et par elle, c'est-à-dire qu'elle réside dans la médiation perpétuelle du croyant. Mais ne faisons-nous pas dépendre la réalité divine de l'acte qui le pense? Dieu ne s'épuise-t-il pas dans les affirmations subjectives qui semblent l'engendrer?

Ceci est important, et il faut y insister. L'esprit, avous-nous dit, ne se crée comme esprit que par la foi en Dieu. Mais cette foi en Dieu se ramène à l'affirmation qu'il est lui-même conditionné par Dieu, c'est-à-dire à l'affirmation de la paternité divine. C'est-à-dire que l'esprit pose Dieu comme le posant. (21)

(iii) Freedom.

A further interesting exercise is to compare what Aquinas and Marcel say about freedom, potentiality and being. It would appear that Marcel has concentrated so much on Aquinas's principle of causality that he has either misunderstood the import of these insights basic to Aquinas, or, fearing any form of abstraction consequent on systematization, declined to be "snared" by Thomist reasoning. For Marcel, man's freedom is received and at the same time is determined by the self, since man is a being who shares in reality and is according to his mode of self-determination. Marcel's notion of freedom is closely connected with his notion of being : his philosophy is one of both being and freedom. It is man's freedom and his use of it which determines his "becoming", his self-creation. Both being and freedom are creative. In this context we can appreciate how Marcel's notion of being-becoming is compatible with the Thomist notion of potentiality. Man's powers are his potential and as such need to be activated. While Aquinas says expressly that essence is "that through which the ens has esse"<sup>22</sup>, he none the less asserts that esse gives rise to essence<sup>23</sup>, that being is denominated by esse<sup>24</sup>, and that every essence is actualized by its esse.<sup>25</sup>

B. Marcel and Augustine

O Deus, quid vocaris? Est vocor dixit.<sup>26</sup>

In style Marcel is more closely related to Saint Augustine : the metaphysical enquiry of both is dialogical<sup>27</sup> in character. There are, besides, areas of close agreement in their thought.

Mention has already been made<sup>28</sup> of Marcel's view that there is a positive value in existential uneasiness : its leavening effect on the soul leads to conversion so that the soul may find its true centre in ontological communion. Marcel claims kinship with Augustine on this score and recognizes that a similar restlessness has animated his own life and philosophical enquiry.<sup>29</sup> Marcel accommodates the contemporary existential principle of "anguish" within a religious context by proclaiming that uneasiness is salutary when it reveals the need for closer dependence on Him in whom the restless soul finds its peace even if it must first pass through

"the dark night of the soul".

On pourrait dire que l'inquiétude n'est pas seulement inévitable mais qu'elle est proprement salutaire, en ce qu'elle correspond à l'impatience de l'âme croyante qui, parce qu'elle vit encore dans l'obscurité de la foi, souffre d'être encore privée de la Vision. (30)

Marcel may or may not have been influenced by Augustine's "proof from within". But he does linger over the phrase "self-consciousness" in a slightly different context, that of the mind's apperception of being. We may state firmly that Augustine's metaphysics of personal and "religious" experience, originating from the indubitable nature of self-consciousness is remarkably similar to Marcel's approach. According to Augustine, the immediate self-consciousness envelops more than the self. I know that I am, but from common knowledge I also know that once I was not.<sup>31</sup> This, says Augustine, leads to my consciousness of status as creature, of having been created, and therefore my self-consciousness includes an immediate apprehension of the Creator. My self-consciousness is also consciousness of God. This is not, however, pure ontologism for the starting-point is consciousness of self. "In order to know God," Augustine advises, "do not go outside yourself, but return into yourself. The dwelling-place of truth is in the inner man. And if you discover your own nature as subject to change, then go beyond that change. Press on, therefore, towards the source from which the light of reason itself is kindled."<sup>32</sup>

In his metaphysics of being Marcel, like Augustine, is in no way a Neo-Platonist. The Neo-Platonists place the One or the Good above Being. For Augustine God is the limit, God is Being and Being is God. While Marcel may consider the Platonic τὸ ὄντως ὄν as a reasonably adequate approximation of the ontological import of Being<sup>33</sup>, he does not follow Plato or his followers in interpreting Being as subordinate to any Idea or Good. Like Gregory of Nyssa, Marcel adapts Plato's idea of the possible ascent of man to the Form of the Beautiful. Whereas Plato used the analogy of a ladder, Marcel adopts the Cappadocian Gregory's notion of a three-tiered participation.<sup>34</sup> The element of Platonism in Marcel is not as marked as it is in Augustine. For example, Marcel does not attempt to interpret everything, like creation, in terms of Greek philosophy. Marcel's notion of supra-temporal fidelity cannot be construed as an off-shoot of the Platonic theory of immortality. Marcel affirms that the real core of the person as participating in intersubjective communion is indestructible; but he is not saying that the soul is something which will be perpetuated. He repudiates any attempt to objectify either the individual or Being. He declares that it is impossible to love a person "authentically" without affirming the imperishable value of the loved one.

It is not so much, then, a matter of how Platonist Marcel is, as of determining to what extent his thought is sympathetic to that of Augustine.

Marcel would no doubt have agreed with Augustine's understanding of "essence" had not the word been given a different "coloration" by Aquinas. For Augustine, "essentia" was a Latinized neologism which does not exactly translate the Greek οὐσία.<sup>35</sup> The charge of Platonism levelled at Augustine by Gilson<sup>36</sup> is based on a Thomist interpretation. According to that interpretation, Marcel's notion of Being could be considered as Platonic as Augustine's. But nobody has accused Marcel of Neo-Platonism on that score.

Marcel's affinity with Augustine can be seen in their appreciation of the Biblical self-identification of God. In introducing himself to mankind (through the intermediary of Moses) as JHWH, God does not add any predicative adjectives. He identifies himself solely in terms of unqualified Being. Any predicative attributes, in Augustine's view, follow from the initial fact of his being.<sup>37</sup> Marcel's complaint that classical ontology - with reference to God - has been devitalized by static attributes has already been indicated. But whereas Augustine's metaphysics centres on God who is Being, on God who is Is<sup>38</sup>, Marcel is reluctant to proclaim that the identity of Being with God (as he understands the terms) can be taken for granted. It is, after all, always possible to reach a philosophical conception of Being which does not satisfy the believer, or which is even incompatible with what the believer means by God.<sup>39</sup> Both Being and God are dynamic notions; where there is being there is creativity, God is characterized by creation. Marcel tries to sidestep the issue by concentrating on the existential implications rather than on an academic issue. If we are to seek the Eternal Presence of God, he tells us, it will be not so much by philosophizing about the nature of Being or of God, as in our own creative, lived relations with others. It is through the analogy of our loving communion in being that we can come to appreciate the unity in the Trinity of God.

On this matter of participation, Marcel is close to Augustine. Both hold that to participate in being is to possess esse (being) by receiving it (from God).<sup>40</sup> Thus Marcel repeats that we receive our being, our life, our existence. On this point he agrees also with Aquinas : participation means to have esse without being it, a claim which is exclusive to God. For Marcel, the nature of existence is the clue to the nature of being. The more my existence participates in that of others, the closer it comes to Being and the more I am. The more I restrict myself in the "crispation" of egocentrism the less I am.<sup>41</sup>

One important area in which Marcel does not follow Augustine is the question of evil and suffering. Augustine's attempt at theodicy verges on predestination. His argument is based on the Pauline exegesis of the Fall as related in Genesis.<sup>42</sup> Marcel's attitude towards theodicy in general, and his own "solution" by converting the problem of evil and suffering into mystery has already been discussed.<sup>43</sup>



Finally, however, Marcel would seem to agree with Augustine that philosophy, being the love of wisdom, is ultimately oriented towards God. As far as Augustine is concerned, the "true" philosopher is a lover of God;<sup>44</sup> for Marcel, wisdom appears at least as a tributary to an action of the Holy Spirit. He claims that this sense of wisdom has permeated his thought not only since his religious conversion but before it as well. For those who do not prefer such a theological expression as "Holy Spirit", he suggests - once again not altogether helpfully -

de puissances spirituelles qui ne se trouvent point  
placées dans l'orbite du monde humain. (45)

The Wise Man is not a lay transposition of the Saint. Marcel berates such an attitude as derisory because, in his view, holiness is not a possession but a special grace which must be constantly safeguarded. Arising from the awareness of our absolute insecurity, wisdom is coupled with humility and "se présente bien moins comme un état que comme une visée."<sup>46</sup> One is not wise, he declares, but one tends to become wise<sup>47</sup>, attaining complete wisdom only in ultimate union with Wisdom. It would appear, then, that Marcel is reinforcing the accusation that his language is emotive and poetical, his content religious. He describes wisdom in the contemporary situation as "tragic", and it is in this negative sense he gives the word that he differs from Augustine's sense of joyful peace. Yet Marcel holds out the hope that an appreciation of wisdom as "tragic" can safeguard the meaning of life (as he sees it) and help prevent man from yielding to a "technological" brand of idolatry.<sup>48</sup>

#### FOOTNOTES TO APPENDIX 1

1. E. Gilson, "Un exemple", loc. cit., 8. Marcel's "mysticism" is at least not of a negative kind. He avoids the close affinity, as he sees it, of nihilism (represented by Sartre) and negative mysticism. Nihilism, he explains, holds that there is no transcendent Being to which man can be related, while negative mysticism envisages the individual being as engulfed in the reality of transcendent Being. Marcel, however, insists that the real core of the person, while participating in intersubjectivity, is indissoluble and indestructible.
2. "Au fond, c'est à la jonction d'Aristote et de Platon que ma pensée tend, je crois, et s'articule, cette jonction qu'on risque de ne plus voir si on s'hypnotise sur des données strictement terminologiques" (Letter to M. de Corte, 29 September 1948). De Corte comments, "Tous les grands philosophes se situent au point de jonction de Platon et d'Aristote" (Introduction, PACMO 39).
3. Saint Thomas Aquinas, Summa Theologiae, I, q. xiii, a. xi, responsio.
4. M. de Corte, Introduction, PACMO 40-43.
5. HV 156.

6. HV 91, EPC 76-77.
7. cf. Ch. Widmer, op. cit., 121.
8. EA I 32-33.
9. EA I 38-45. cf. Saint Thomas Aquinas, Summa Theologiae, I, q. ii, a. 1 resp. : "Dico ergo quod haec propositio, Deus est, quantum in se est, per se nota est; quia praedicatum est idem cum subjecto." Nevertheless, as has been considered (Chapter 1, pp. 17, 27, Chapter 3, p. 83; cf. EA I 152), to say "Being is" is, by itself, unsatisfactory and inadequate; it is complete. Similarly, to say "God is" does not really help us any further in our enquiries.
10. See Chapter 3, pp. 83-84.
11. Saint Thomas Aquinas, Quaestiones disputatae, tom. 3., De Veritate, q. xxiv, a. 12, ad 2m; ibid., tom. 1., De Malo, q. v, a. 2.
12. PI 89. cf. J. Maritain (on Aquinas), Neuf leçons sur les notions premières de la philosophie morale (coll. "Cours et documents", 1951), 123, 127.
13. cf. ME II 178. Examples from Marcel's plays are Simon Bernauer (Chapter 5, pp. 148-149) and Pascal Laumière (Appendix 2, III B, pp. 229-231).
14. JM 79. He adds : "Négalement la révélation n'est que l'interprétation supprimée. La révélation est par essence ce qui ne peut être réfléchi (dissocié), et le problème du monde se ramène en dernière analyse au problème de la révélation."
15. PI 89.
16. ibid. And he adds, "De ce point de vue, la conscience, braquée sur elle-même et peut-être se voulant comme close, serait dressée contre la révélation." (cf. Chapter 3, p. 84). The reason for his reluctance to rely on the unverifiable phenomena of revelation may be due to the influence of Royce. Royce postulates the "paradox" of revelation. The paradox arises, Royce claims, at the point where we see that the criteria by which we evaluate or judge the disclosure must be supplied by the disclosure itself.
17. ME II 188. cf. HCH 199, and "Theism and Personal Relationships", loc. cit., 42 : "There is ... every reason to believe that Revelation is the crowning of an immense cosmic travail which at one and the same time calls it forth and implies it as its internal source. I should therefore reach the conclusion that if Theism is considered in the abstract and in terms of objectivity, the question of personal relationships will in the end prove insoluble; yet, on the contrary, the elements of a solution will be all the more numerous and illuminating if Theism is considered in the only light possible, the light of Revelation."
18. Saint Thomas Aquinas, Summa Theologiae, I, q. xii, a. 4. W.E. Carlo, op. cit., 110, notes that contemporary Scholastics still use "essence" and esse as counters in a system of multiplication which serves to distinguish God from creatures as Unity from plurality, the One and the many, rather than Infinite Being from finite being. This latter distinction, he claims, was Aquinas's own notion : "These are not their esse but are 'composed' of essence and esse. It is because creatures are composite we can distinguish from the perfect simplicity of Ipsium esse subsistens." It would appear that Marcel understands "essence" very much in the same way as that alleged by Carlo of the Neo-Scholastics. Such an interpretation based on theirs would explain Marcel's antipathy to "philosophies founded on essences alone". "Pour dire le fond de ma pensée, je pense d'une part que la personne n'est pas et ne peut pas être une essence, et d'autre part qu'une métaphysique édiflée en quelque sorte à l'écart ou à l'abri des essences risque de s'évanouir comme un château de cartes" (EPC 174).

19. JM 35-36.
20. JM 33.
21. JM 46. See Chapter 4, p. 116.
22. Saint Thomas Aquinas, De Ente et essentia, cp. 1.
23. Saint Thomas Aquinas, De Potentia, q. iii, a. 4.
24. Saint Thomas Aquinas, Summa contra Gentiles, II, 54.
25. Saint Thomas Aquinas, De Spiritu creationis, a. 11.
26. Saint Augustine, Sermo VI, 3, 4 (PL 38, 61).
27. cf. R. Berlinger, Augustins dialogische Metaphysik (Frankfurt, 1962).
28. See Chapter 1, p. 17.
29. HP 111, Schg 117. cf. PI 91 : "Peut-être placer en épigraphe de mon oeuvre : 'animas nostras et Deum simul concorditer inquiramus' (Saint Augustin, Soliloques, cité par le Père de Lubac)."
30. HP 119.
31. cf. P. Tillich, Biblical Religion and the Search for the Ultimate (1955), p. 11 : "Certainly we belong to being - its power is in us - otherwise we would not be. But we are also separated from it; we do not possess it fully. Our power of being is limited. We are a mixture of being and non-being. This is precisely what is meant when we say that we are finite."
32. Saint Augustine, De vera religione, I, xxxix, 72 (PL 34, 154) : "Noli foras ire, in teipsum redi; in interiore homine habitat veritas; et si tuam naturam mutabilem inveneris, transcede et teipsum. Sed memento cum te transcendis, ratiocinantem animam te transcendere. Illuc ergo tende, unde ipsum lumen rationis ascenditur." The close similarity of this text with that of Hugh of St. Victor (see Chapter 1, fn 33, p. 32) who was greatly influenced by Augustine shows that, indirectly at least, Marcel was following Augustine's line of thought at a very early stage in his philosophical career.
33. cf. EA I 168, ST 112.
34. See Chapter 6, fn 84, p. 203.
35. Saint Augustine, De Trinitate, V, 2, 3 (PL 42, 912). cf. Hugh of St. Victor, De Sacramentis, II, i, 4 (PL 176, 376 D).
36. E. Gilson, Introduction à l'Etude de Saint Augustin, Paris, 1929, 2nd ed. 1940, p. 266 : "Son Dieu est bien le Dieu chrétien qui crée l'être, mais c'est un Dieu suprêmement être, au sens platonicien du terme. Rien, au fond, de plus naturel. Augustin ne pouvait concevoir la création, qui est le don de l'être, qu'en fonction de sa conception de l'être. Son Dieu créateur est donc Celui qui 'est ce qu'il est', cause première de 'ce que les êtres sont'." "Essence", for Augustine, can only be used for God who exists in that he is immutable. If anything, Anderson suggests, Augustine's "essentia" is akin to Aquinas's "ens" (J. Anderson, St Augustine and Being, p. 66). cf. ME II 22-26 for Marcel's caution over accepting "ens" or "esse" as terms to denote the act of existing.
37. Saint Augustine, De Trinitate, VII, 4, 9 (PL 42, 942) : "hoc est Deo esse quod subsistere." cf. his De moribus ecclesiae catholicae, I, 14, 24 (PL 32, 1321) : "(Deum) nihil aliud dicam esse, nisi idipsum esse."
38. Saint Augustine, Enarratio in Ps. CI, sermo 2, 10 (PL 37, 1311) : "non est ibi nisi Est"; Sermo VI, 3, 4 (PL 38, 61); Confessiones XIII, 31, 46 (PL 32, 865). See Chapter 3, fn 56, p. 98. As Anderson, op. cit., p. 15, explains : "God is immutable but he is immutable because

- he is; he is, not because he is immutable. God is himself, but he is, not because he is himself."
39. cf. Peter A. Bertocci, The Person God Is, London, 1970, pp. 18-36.
  40. Augustine's notion of participation is not the same as that of Plotinus, according to whom to participate in a thing is to be that thing itself (Enneads VI, 4, 11 :  $\pi\acute{\alpha}\nu \tau\acute{o} \acute{o}\nu \acute{\epsilon}\nu$  ). Marcel certainly does not advocate any such pantheist notion (cf. fn 1 above, p. 219). Furthermore, Marcel notes (EPC 37, PI 17) that he himself uses the term "participation" with a meaning altogether different from that used by Plato. Marcel's aim, he announces, is to safeguard the notion of participation without "denaturing" it, by which he means without converting it into an objectifiable relationship.
  41. cf. ME II 11-12, 37, Schg 73.
  42. The exegesis runs as follows. Through a misuse by the first pair (Adam and Eve) of their God-given free-will, sin and suffering entered a creation originally perfect. Evil, understood by Augustine, as the privation of good, increases in proportion to the diminution of good and, as matter is of a lower order than spirit, all that is material, including man, deteriorates. Hence disease, pain and suffering in the world. But, as Hick points out in Evil and the God of Love, two difficulties arise. First, how could a perfect being reject God? Such a rejection seems impossible unless there were already sinful inclinations in Adam's nature. This is, in effect, what Augustine implies, even if he will not say it explicitly for it leads to predestination. Secondly, our knowledge of human evolution - admittedly gained centuries after Augustine - makes it very hard to postulate a "first man" endowed with the intellectual maturity (not to mention the spiritual perfection which seems to be in line with Rousseau's theory of initial human nature) which the Augustinian theory requires. If this were so, the Fall brought about the greatest mental black-out of all time.
  43. See Chapter 4, pp. 118-120.
  44. Saint Augustine, De Civitate Dei, VIII, 1 (PL 41, 224-225) : "Porro si sapientia Deus est, per quem facta sunt omnia sicut divina auctoritas veritasque monstravit [Wisdom 7: 24-27, Hebrews 1: 2-3], verus philosophus est amator Dei."
  45. ST 288.
  46. ST 301. And he adds by way of reminder, "et il faut rappeler ici une fois de plus la référence sentie à notre insécurité fondamentale."
  47. ST 307. cf. Chapter 2, p. 62.
  48. ST 294-295, 299.

## APPENDIX 2

MORE DETAILED RESUMES  
OF SOME OF MARCEL'S PLAYS WHICH ILLUSTRATE  
PHILOSOPHICAL INSIGHTS PRESENTED IN THE THESIS

I. The Primary Ontological Question ("What am I?")

Mon théâtre est le théâtre de l'âme en exil, de l'âme qui souffre du manque de communion avec elle-même et avec les autres. Le mensonge intérieur y joue un rôle prépondérant. (1)

Un Homme de Dieu.

In his theatre Gabriel Marcel provides many examples of characters in search of their identity who, through asking "What am I?", are forced to reconsider themselves in the light of the ambiguity of existence. One of the early plays which studies possible reactions to this primary ontological question is Un Homme de Dieu (written in 1922). The protagonists are Claude Lemoyne, a Protestant pastor, and Edmée, his righteous wife. By questioning the motives of their actions in the not-forgotten past, they are shocked out of their complacency and come to realize that they can neither judge each other nor be sure even of themselves.

Edmée, who had been unfaithful to her husband more than twenty years before the action takes place, discovers that Claude had, at the time, divulged to his mother the secret of her affair which he had sworn to keep after forgiving her. While she accuses him of self-interest and rejects his forgiveness as "cheap", Edmée does not escape the nemesis of the past. She is led to suspect her own motives by her former lover, Michel Sandier. This man, who unexpectedly returns, is suffering from an incurable disease. His last wish is to see his child Osmonde who has been brought up as Claude's natural daughter. Sandier charges Edmée with mauvaise foi in not accepting her responsibilities but instead counting on Claude's pardon.<sup>2</sup>

For his part, Claude is revealed to himself as a Cornelian généreux gone awry. He had used his pardoning of Edmée as a palliative for his own interior tension at that time and as a means for practising charity. Now, naïvely, he had interpreted Sandier's projected visit as a further trial

from which he would emerge further strengthened.<sup>3</sup> He proves to be a généreux raté when, clinging in desperation to any straw to bolster his wavering self-justification, he resorts to a lie. He tells Osmonde of her real parentage but claims that he has only discovered this truth himself. By this deception he hopes to retain her esteem and divert the blame on Edmée. But Claude is not to escape : truth must out, and Osmonde abandons him, running away with "the man upstairs".

Claude is left to doubt himself. Faced with his earlier conduct, he now doubts his status as husband and even his manhood. (He has learnt neither to hate nor to love.<sup>4</sup>) Finally, he doubts his vocation. In desperation he turns for reassurance that he is at least a "man of God" first to his brother (a doctor), but receives only a professional view, then to his mother. But she misunderstands his anguish; her efforts to assuage it serve only to aggravate his condition. His formation in the ministry, he realizes, had been mechanical, his style of life "tout fait", patterned on the tradition of his forefathers. He is no more than a religious functionary, albeit zealous and conscientious but devoid of authentic significance.

There is no solution to the play, but only the public esteem of his congregation - who judge by externals - as a salve to the tragic catharsis.<sup>5</sup> "What am I?" remains the only metaphysical problem which may induce despairing anguish if there is no religion or supreme Recourse to whom to appeal.<sup>6</sup> At least, in this respect, Claude does have that one plank. His final words, "Etre connu tel qu'on est", are addressed as an appeal to the One who does know us as we really are.<sup>7</sup> It all depends, therefore, on faith - not in a someone but in a You (toi) - in the Absolute Thou, if we are to be saved from a meaningless existence.

Que suis-je, moi qui questionne, dans ce monde ou en  
dehors de lui? En ce sens il faudra dire que l'esprit  
philosophique est celui qui en présence du donné  
éprouve une sorte d'impatience qui peut devenir anxiété. (8)

We may note that the true "man of God" is the saint whose quality of saintliness is not to be felt as an unnatural or outrageous anomaly by a weak humanity. Saintliness, Marcel hopes, will arouse certain echoes in our own hearts and stimulate us, too, to hope. For the saint is

l'intercesseur auprès de Celui que nul progrès de la  
technique et de la connaissance et de ce qu'on appelle  
la moralité ne rapprochera jamais de qui l'implore  
du fond de sa chambre de torture. (9)

## II. Towards Ontological Communion

Plus mon existence affecte un caractère inclusif, plus l'intervalle qui la sépare de l'être tend à se rétrécir, en d'autres termes plus je suis. (10)

Cette communion universelle elle-même ne peut se suspendre qu'au Toi absolu. (11)

### Le Monde cassé.

Disappointed when the young man on whom she had set her heart entered a Benedictine monastery, Christiane had married Laurent Chesnay who has at least an assured career in the world. But from the outset it would appear that they are incompatible. Christiane, still suffering from her wounded heart, has been frigid to Laurent's first advances and, having no faith, has abandoned herself to seeking solace in the diversions of the social scene. For his part, Laurent has retired into the shell of a solitude of his own making, realizing that Christiane's attitude towards him is more dictated from a sense of duty than inspired by love. But Christiane, while being worldly, is not flighty. She is acutely aware that her world, at least, is broken. In a Marcellian metaphor, she compares it to a broken watch, intact according to external appearances but whose internal mechanism no longer functions.<sup>12</sup>

She tries to draw Laurent back to her by offering to make various sacrifices; she humbles herself, asking his pardon for not having reciprocated his love at the outset of their marriage. Laurent, however, is too preoccupied with his carefully nurtured suffering ego (moi). Preferring to remain obstinately indisponible, he does not heed her appeal. There has been no communion, not even on a physical plane. In frustration Christiane cries, "Le silence de notre vie m'accable."<sup>13</sup> Her husband is unmoved. She does achieve some success in defrosting Laurent, but it is through the subterfuge of "confessing" to having an affair with an expatriate Russian musician, the boorish Antonov. This "revelation" gives the somewhat masochistic Laurent some satisfaction in that he can, with more justification, play the part of the cuckolded husband who none the less forgives his wife out of the greatness of his soul.<sup>14</sup>

But Christiane is still no nearer to her husband. His assumed pity, she has to admit, is just another facet of his self-love.<sup>15</sup> She is on the point of making her lie a reality by giving herself to the younger, seductive Gilbert. She is impelled to take this step all the more so after she receives the crushing news of the premature death of Dom Maurice whom, as Jacques Decroy, she had loved unbeknown to him. Yet it is precisely at this point where there seems no alternative to her despair that she is saved through the intervention of grace. This is not the irresistible grace of the Jansenists, but that which we are free to accept or refuse. Chris-

tiane is able to accept it for, although without religious faith as yet, she is already disposed to open herself to its operations by first opening herself to her husband, even if he is still unresponsive. The key, therefore, to the possible fructification of grace in the soul is disponibilité, the ready availability of one's being to welcome such infusions. The occasion for this invitation to the "invisible world" which counter-balances our "broken world" is, in Christiane's case, the unexpected visit of Geneviève, the sister of the late and lamented Dom Maurice.

Geneviève tells the astonished Christiane that, in the fastness of his monastic cell, her brother had known of Christiane's love. Christiane's first reaction is revolt at this apparently heartless lack on his part to remedy the situation. If Jacques knew she loved him, why did he turn his back on her? And if he found out later, as Dom Maurice, how could he have found out? Geneviève is unaware of the importance of her message and does not comprehend the significance of Christiane's awed question, "Who sent you, Geneviève?" Indeed, she herself does not apply the message to her own situation : she has secretly longed for the death of her own impotent husband. She tells Christiane that her brother, feeling somehow responsible for Christiane's state of soul, had prayed for her.

After a slow start, grace acts swiftly. Christiane feels Jacques's presence; rather she rediscovers it since it has never left her. As earlier, in Un Homme de Dieu, this is a drama of the "soul in exile", the drama of a being which does not know itself and so does not live fully. This, Christiane now sees, is what she has been guilty of, as much as Laurent. Both have strayed from living in reality - she by taking refuge in frivolous amusements, he by sheltering in a self-centred subjectivity. In this way, she points out to her husband, they have both sinned against Reality : there is a communion of sinners as there is a communion of saints.<sup>16</sup>

Therein lies the way for them to true communion in intersubjective love. In answer to the appeal inherent in Geneviève's unconscious revelation, Christiane sees that there is something in this life which makes sense. Thus she proceeds from the first (aesthetic) stage of existence through the second (ethical) to the third (religious); she discovers the source of the answer to the primary ontological question. A part of the totality of her being has already been illumined by the new light irradiating through the mists of Being itself. Laurent can also appreciate this wonderful new discovery, which is the Mystery of Being. He has seen through the falsity of objectification on the level of "having". He has already glimpsed the truth that there remains something hidden and unable to be grasped, an inventory beyond the scope of ordinary language.<sup>17</sup> At the end of the play Christiane and Laurent are reunited through the new faith which has been awakened in them, a faith sustained by their fidelity, hope and love.



### III. The Salvific Properties of Openness to the Influence of Grace

Ces lignes (l'Emissaire, III, v) pourraient être mises en exergue de tout mon théâtre et plus généralement encore de toute mon oeuvre. Elles la caractérisent dans ce qu'elle a de foncièrement anti-dogmatique, c'est à partir de là qu'on peut entrevoir ce que je veux dire quand je parle de ce secret qui est dans les îles, un secret dont on peut dire jusqu'à un certain point qu'il en est un pour moi-même. Il m'est arrivé souvent de dire que la plupart de mes pièces étaient écrites sous les lignes du Oui-Mais... Je voulais dire par là qu'elles marquent une protestation contre toutes les formules dans lesquelles on cherche à emprisonner la vie. (18)

#### A. L'Emissaire.

Clément Ferrier, the eponymous character of this play which was written in 1949, is, like Geneviève, the bearer of a message of which he himself is unaware. His daughter, Sylvie, who has not yet reached the threshold of faith, proves herself receptive to the operations of grace when she sees that there is something sacred in her father's sufferings on his return from a German concentration camp.<sup>19</sup> To those of her family circle who urge her to adopt a more "reasonable" approach to the broken man, she protests: "Ce que vous appelez raisonner ce n'est qu'un moyen de se fermer soi-même à une évidence ou à un appel."<sup>20</sup> In her eyes even Antoine Sorgue, her fiancé, is "refus" since he judges Clément's condition as the result of brain-washing and can see no evidence of an appeal.<sup>21</sup> Though she is deterred from embracing religion so long as Antoine regards his faith as an exclusive possession, Sylvie strengthens her disponibilité by not despairing of him.

Foreseeing only darkness and dread<sup>22</sup> during her private "dark night of the soul" when she hesitates to commit herself by taking the decisive step to conversion, she nevertheless senses an ever-increasingly strong appeal to help Antoine. Together they accede to the threshold of that other kingdom, mysteriously distant and near, which "we see and we do not see", through the mutual discovery of a love which surpasses natural love.

Antoine is redeemed from egocentrism through Sylvie's charity in not doubting him. In the same moment of appeal and response in which he is closer to her than before, Sylvie also gains access to faith, paradoxically because he begins to doubt his.<sup>23</sup> It is this weakness in his armour of "having", which would have impelled him to despair, that is the source of the vital appeal for Sylvie to save him. In a mysterious exchange, Antoine's resuscitated faith finds an echo in Sylvie's soul whereby she glimpses the Light "qui déconcerte à l'infini tout jugement".<sup>24</sup> Sylvie at last finds her true self by answering the call for which she was initially responsible, because it was motivated by her love for Antoine.

B. Rome n'est plus dans Rome.

This theme is taken up in greater depth in Rome n'est plus dans Rome which was written two years later (1951) at a time of domestic crisis in France. Pascal Laumière and his nephew Marc-André help each other to find the source of the appeal to fulfil themselves. They both try to escape from their separate appeals but are drawn towards the awareness of the mysterious bond which unites them to each other and to the world, and which gives life its meaning.

(i) Marc-André

Like Sylvie, Marc-André is disillusioned with religion. After a disconcerting experience with a Protestant minister who did not believe in the Resurrection, he had considered communism as an alternative.<sup>25</sup> But, still unsure of himself, he appeals to his uncle to shed some light on the meaning of life and repair the breached credibility gap between life and religion. He hopes that if Pascal believes and has lived, there may be a God for both of them. Yet, while gaining no such assurance, Marc-André does not despair; he wants not so much to live as to survive.<sup>26</sup>

The first glimmer of hope, and evidence that the boy is responsive to appeal, is his admission of having been greatly impressed by the example of the father of one of his friends. This man had refused to leave France for Mexico and, while admitting his own weakness, relied on the strength of God who, he was calmly sure, would not abandon him. The words of this "true believer" find an echo in Marc-André's soul : it is the initial appeal.<sup>27</sup> This appeal is intensified later when he receives a letter from a soldier-friend in Indo-China which explains the desperate situation of the writer and his comrades-in-arms. Marc-André acts. Repelled by his communistic friends' fanatical extremism, and responding to this appeal from his distant friend, he refuses to sign a petition which, if successful, would mean certain death for those fighting abroad.

Again like Sylvie, Marc-André is brought to realize that the way to the "other kingdom" is dark and beset by danger and the possibility of despair. Even hope is terrifyingly silent and involves risk and sacrifice. In his uncertainty, he feels himself torn between the "easy way out" of passive resignation and the more demanding and more active approach of self-commitment. He says to Pascal who commends him for his courage,

Je ne crois pas que je croie en Dieu, mais je pense continuellement aux morts. C'est peut-être parce qu'ils me tirent à eux tout le temps que je résiste si passionnément, que je veux si éperdument survivre. Je suis double, oncle Pascal, double et pourtant le même. (28)

Marc-André eventually meets a Brazilian girl, Teresa, who reawakens in him the beauty and freshness of youthful enthusiasm. Marc-André is saved, finding joy in life. He has now left the road which would lead to "le rond-

point de la désolation".<sup>29</sup> In all likelihood, Marcel suggests, after a recuperative process like restful sleep following the insomnia of turbulent youth. Marc-André will awaken to the world of his new-found Brazilian friends who are "des êtres sans problème; des êtres qui refusent des problèmes."<sup>30</sup>

(ii) Pascal

Pascal's redemption is more important and of a higher order, for it involves a more far-reaching conversion. Pascal's grave inadequacy he feels before Marc-André is complete lack of faith. He believes in nothing and is therefore powerless to help his groping nephew in that respect. Aware of his deficiency, he exclaims :

Mon enfant, jamais, je te le jure, mon manque de foi ne m'a été plus cruellement sensible car si j'étais relié, relié au Christ, il me semble qu'une certaine lumière me serait accordée et je ne vois rien. (31)

Pascal is a lost soul, knowing neither his own real self nor that of others. Fearing how he will react to possible torture if his enemies seize power, he decides to flee the country and lose himself and his conscience in South America.<sup>32</sup> His sister-in-law, Esther, in whom he finds a welcoming sympathy, suspects that by this action Pascal will be heeding a false appeal. With great insight she warns him :

Il ne peut pas nous être donné de quitter ce pays le coeur léger et de voguer plein d'espérance vers je ne sais quel mirage : l'idée d'une vie nouvelle dans un monde nouveau. Si un tel départ est possible - et comment le saurions-nous? - ce ne peut pas être qu'après la mort. De ce côté-ci nous qui ne sommes pas purifiés, nous avons à attendre que la justice. Nous sommes impurs, Pascal, et ce départ lui-même n'est qu'une impureté. Cette vérité, je vous demande à moi-même de vous en pénétrer jusqu'au fond. C'est le commencement de la mort. (33)

Prophetic words indeed!

Pascal, like Sylvie, is redeemed through his engagement towards another. In this case it is his nephew Marc-André whom he sees as belonging to a most unprovided-for generation.<sup>34</sup> Out of his friendship for Esther, Pascal feels responsible for Marc-André whom he promises earnestly - even if he is unaware of the cost or the sacrifice entailed - never to abandon.<sup>35</sup> In effect, he hopes for Marc-André. Because of his selfless love for another, Pascal shows himself to be receptive to the operation of grace and permeable to the Light he seeks. As yet he lacks faith and does not know in whom to hope. "I hope in ... for us." The blank is filled in later, in Brazil, by means of two successive encounters - the first negative, the second positive - which complement and confirm each other to effect his conversion.

The first encounter is with Padre Ricardo. This priest's aggressive,

insolent and even "pagan" clericalism revolts Pascal - all the more when Padre Ricardo suggests that Pascal must have fled the liberalizing atmosphere in France in order to join the arch-conservatives in their fight to champion orthodoxy.<sup>36</sup> This assumption has an effect contrary to that desired. Pascal construes this "insult" to Christ by one of His chosen ministers as an appeal. He explains to Esther :

C'est en effet un mouvement de l'âme bien mystérieux ... ou plutôt c'est comme si avec un étrange regard derrière les paroles impies de ce religieux j'avais cru entendre un appel infiniment discret ... une réponse à ma question ... Pas avec les sens; c'est inexprimable. (37)

Pascal's desire to rectify the harmful influence of Padre Ricardo is a prolongation of the responsibility he feels towards his nephew. This sense of responsibility has now been sublimated towards God. And almost at once grace accelerates his disposition when, on the same day, he experiences a second encounter which is to leave more than a lasting impression and confirm his faith.<sup>38</sup> He meets unexpectedly a young ascetic monk whose very facial expression stirs the depths of Pascal's eager soul. Although he is not in the habit of speaking to strangers, he cannot help exchanging a few words. As he tells Esther,

Vous n'imaginez pas la pureté du sourire qui illumina ce visage émacié ... c'était le sourire du Christ. (39)

Pascal has met Christ, in the person of the young monk; he recognizes him at once in that smile. This encounter and appeal is more like that experienced by the disciples of Christ at Emmaus<sup>40</sup> than like Saint Paul's encounter on the road to Damascus. As Claudel says, "connaissance est connaissance"; at once Pascal is bathed in the light of his spiritual rebirth. He recalls Esther's words concerning the futility of escapism, admits his fault and realizes that the access to the "other kingdom" is not to be located in earthly things. He recalls also the words of the father of Marc-André's friend about God giving strength to the weak. As all commitment is response<sup>41</sup>, Pascal makes his decision and acts upon it. He declines the offer of a teaching post which would have compromised his principles. To show how far he spurns the materialistic world of "having", he accepts absolute insecurity, throwing himself in absolute dependence on the generosity of God.

Ce refus de me plier à des exigences que ma conscience éprouve, c'est vraiment le Dieu véritable qui me l'a dicté ... et de ce jour je le reconnais, je m'engage vers lui, et il me semble que dans sa condescendance ou dans sa générosité ... car ce ne peut pas être un Dieu sans honneur. (42)

At last Pascal has found himself in finding God. By accepting the risks of total insecurity, Pascal proves he is indeed a man.<sup>43</sup> In complete dependence on and hope in God, he is playing for the stake which is worth the loss of everything else. This is the full impact of the ontological

need; as Antoine Sorgue tells Sylvie, "Le seul risque qui compte est le risque intérieur."<sup>44</sup> The less a being has, the more he is; the more closely he is united to God, the more he fulfils himself. It would appear that Pascal's double discovery is to receive eternal confirmation. When he collapses at the microphone, having confessed his inauthentic behaviour and pleading to his countrymen that they stand fast, it is the young monk who suddenly (miraculously?) appears and goes to his side. The monk says to the anguished Esther, "Madame, laissez-moi aller jusqu'à lui. Je sais qu'il m'attend."<sup>45</sup>

#### IV. Suffering and Death

Le rôle de la mort dans mon théâtre est absolument premier, et aussi d'une certaine manière celle de la maladie; c'est là que nous sommes au coeur même de notre destinée et de notre mystère. (46)

Examples of situations involving the realities of suffering and death abound in Marcel's theatre. Indeed it would seem that death plays a more dominant role than life. Among the characters who die in the course of the action are Clément Ferrier (l'Emissaire), Vernoy (la Fin des temps), David and Simon Bernauer and Tante Léna (le Signe de la Croix), Alfred Champel (Mon Temps n'est pas le vôtre), Bernard (l'Horizon) and presumably, shortly after the final curtain has fallen, Pascal Laumière (Rome n'est plus dans Rome). Those "characters" who, while already dead, influence the attitudes of the survivors include Viviane Delorme (l'Iconoclaste), Madame Chavière (le Fanal), Raymond Fortier (la Chapelle ardente), Maurice Lechevallier (l'Insondable) and Jacques Decroy (le Monde cassé). The thought of death affects the attitude to each other (a) negatively - of Jeanne and Noël Framont (le Mort de demain) and of Germain and Thérèse Lestrade (l'Horizon); (b) positively - of Christiane and Laurent Chesnay (Le Monde cassé) and of Werner Schnee and Beatrice Soreau (le Dard); it also influences Bernard Groult (Un Juste) into adopting a pacifist position. Of those suffering either physically or mentally (i.e. spiritually) the more important characters are Stella and Amédée Chartrain (les Coeurs avides), Jacques Delorme (l'Iconoclaste), Eustache Soreau (le Dard), Aline Fortier (la Chapelle ardente), and the enigmatic Ariane Leprieur (le Chemin de crête).

Basically, the difference between positive and negative reactions to the mysteries of suffering and death - at least in the way Marcel understands authentic and inauthentic behaviour - is a reflection of the distinctions between being and having, disponibilité and indisponibilité, fidelity and pseudo-fidelity.

(a) being and having

The ontologically debilitating effects of too great a preoccupation with what one has can be seen in the characters of Jeanne Framont (le Mort de demain), Germain Lestrade (l'Horizon) and Aline Fortier (la Chapelle ardente). Because they are worried about the possible loss of what they have, they are blind to the greater peril : the possible loss of what they are. This is made all the more acute when they include within the compass of their possessions the persons nearest to them:

Jeanne has so convinced herself of the impending death in battle of her husband Noël that she treats him as if he were already a lifeless object. Her reverence to the "idol", which, as her brother-in-law observes, has no sacred character but is made from the debris of the man,<sup>47</sup> is shown in her refusal to allow anyone else to see his letters from the front. They have already become "relics", objects in her possession. Germain is also convinced of an impending death - his own. He is over-practical in his concern for the future of his wife and children.<sup>48</sup> They become objects for an auction. He dissuades his friend Bernard from marrying the young widow who really loves him in favour of his own wife. Germain is prevented from bequeathing Thérèse (his wife) only by the death of his friend whose is the death forecast by the medium they had both visited. Aline, too, treats the memory of her dead son as a possession. No longer able to possess him in this life, she will at least retain not only his childhood objects as "relics" but succeeds further than Germain in that she asserts her influence on Mireille, her son's fiancée, so far as to dissuade her from marrying the young man of her choice. Appealing to the girl's sense of duty as a fellow-sufferer, Aline arranges a marriage of her choice and so keeps Mireille as a "possession" in the family (but loses her own husband). Aline uses her grief as a weapon to continue her domination. Her husband, Octave, repelled by her morbid obsession ("ce goût du malheur et de la mort"), accuses her of constraining Mireille in the stranglehold of tyranny by exploiting the girl's personal sorrow and her admiration for Aline.<sup>49</sup>

Characters who, from the outset, have established properly authentic (according to Marcel's view) existential priorities are rare. The only principal characters with an initial view of suffering and death according to the order of being rather than of having are Tante Léna (le Signe de la Croix) and Arnaud Chartrain (les Coeurs avides).<sup>50</sup>

Mention has already been made of Tante Léna.<sup>51</sup> Now nearing the end of her days she has been purified by her own personal sufferings and is already prepared for the "other kingdom" where one's possessions no longer count. Arnaud, too, is preparing to give himself in consecration to the anticipation on earth of the eternal ontological communion : he will become

a priest. He alone seems to understand the nature and cause of his father's suffering. Amédée may be a preposterous character, self-opinionated and hypersensitive. But he is really very lonely and, while this loneliness may be brought upon himself by his extravagant amour propre which estranges him from others, he needs sympathy.<sup>52</sup> Arnaud recognizes that his father's trouble derives from his inability to communicate either with others or even with himself as to the source and remedy for his "thirst" for meaningful existence. Amédée is unaware of the ontological nature of this "thirst" which is devouring him.<sup>53</sup> In an enlightening passage Arnaud advises Madame de Puyguerland (whose son Stella Chartrain consents to marry in conditions similar to Mireille's acceptance of André Verdet) on the mysterious nature of suffering which has its roots in the soul's thirst for being.

Cette souffrance dont vous parlez et qui va au-delà de ce que la nature admet ... je m'imagine qu'elle est non pas une faute, mais un privilège très lourd, et qu'elle doit s'accompagner d'un certain renoncement. Autrement elle est une complaisance à soi-même. Illicite. Destructrice. Pas seulement pour soi : surtout pour les autres. (54)

An interesting study of a person who has been greatly affected by the sufferings of others - and particularly by their example - is afforded by Edith Lechevallier in the play l'Insondable which Marcel began shortly after the cessation of hostilities in 1918. Although accused by her sister-in-law (who alone does not presume that her husband is dead) of not having strong enough hope, Edith has profited more from their shared experiences. She brings her husband, Robert, who has returned from a prisoner-of-war camp, to realize that he has greatly misjudged his brother, Maurice.<sup>55</sup> In her conversation with the abbé Séveilhac, who was Maurice's army chaplain, Edith anticipates not only Tante Léna but also Pascal Laumière. It is interesting to note that Marcel wrote this play ten years before his conversion and that, years later, when he did publish it as an appendix to his philosophical diary-cum-treatise, Présence et immortalité, he left it unfinished. By then he had discovered the reality of the faith still lacking in Edith; nevertheless he considers the scene between Edith and the abbé as one of the most significant that he has written.<sup>56</sup>

From the opening small-talk it appears that there will be little real dialogue between either of them.<sup>57</sup> The abbé approaches Edith as a case for his professional advice while she yearns to communicate her anxieties about the meaning of love and fidelity both in this world and beyond it. His strictly theological interpretation of prayer seems, to her, to ignore the personal element. When the abbé says, "Prier machinalement, cela a sa valeur,"<sup>58</sup> Edith pierces to the kernel of the problem in her reply :

Cette prière à laquelle vous m'invitez, il me semble qu'elle exile à l'infini ceux pour lesquels elle s'exerce;

entre eux et nous, elle met plus que l'espace, elle met Dieu lui-même. On ne peut prier que pour ceux qui sont vraiment absents ... mais vous ne pouvez pourtant pas prétendre que la mort est une absence! Il y a des moments, monsieur l'abbé, où il m'est plus immédiatement présent qu'il ne le fut jamais de son vivant! (59)

Edith tries to explain how Maurice, though missing, is so near to her more than ever before while her own husband, Robert, although returned, is "absent". He (Robert) is not with her, they are not together. Because the abbé has seen so many die, he may have been reduced to little more than a religious functionary who washes his hands at each death so that they are indeed gone. But for Edith, the truly dead,

les seuls morts sont ceux que nous n'aimons plus. (60)

She becomes so impassioned as to proclaim that the only religion worth the name is that which can open out to "another world" where the objective barriers separating beings who truly love each other vanish in love. This is how she feels the sublimated union between herself and Maurice. It is not sinful in her eyes and she rejects the charges of heresy and superstition, as well as the suggestion that she might be advocating spiritualism. Religion should not be an ethereal ethic but something living. That is why she earnestly tries to give expression to her kind of "entre-tien sans paroles" with Maurice :

Oui, lui et moi, nous sommes intimement unis; oui, je le sens avec moi - toujours plus près de moi ... Lorsque je pense à lui d'une certaine façon - avec tendresse, avec recueillement - il s'émeut en moi comme une vie plus riche, plus profonde, à laquelle je sais qu'il participe. Cette vie, ce n'est pas moi, ce n'est pas lui non plus : c'est nous deux. (61)

(b) "disponibilité" and "indisponibilité"

Perhaps Edith may come closer to Robert, but the prospect is not promising. By the end of the play (as we have it) they are in a position similar to that of Christiane and Laurent long before their mutual enlightenment. Edith has shown herself permeable to the light from beyond this world of the living but she has yet to open herself as freely and wholeheartedly to Robert. And he still prefers her "cruel mouth and silence."<sup>62</sup> It is this complete openness, therefore, this indefinable quality of disponibilité which is the prerequisite for a shared understanding of sorrow, suffering, and the meaning of death. Thus it is that Sylvie Ferrier who acknowledges the "sacred" character of her father's suffering is helped on the way to faith. Thus it is that Werner Schnee and Simon Bernauer who appreciate the need to share in another's sufferings find their ways to this "other kingdom" for which Edith longs. Also, this respect for the human suffering of her father brings about the conversion of Marie-Henri-



ette Champel just as the realization of the need to abdicate all claims to possessions and to live in absolute insecurity is the guarantee of Pascal Laumière's first steps towards his defence of the persecuted Christ and would seem to be a pledge of his sharing in the eternal communion of being.

It is because Jeanne Framont is so obsessed with the present moment - which is a symptom of indisponibilité - that she does not quite make the grade as an authentic existent. Jeanne does not appreciate the tremendous significance of her own phrase : "Aimer un être, c'est lui dire : toi, tu ne mourras pas."<sup>63</sup> This saying, which Marcel recognizes as the clue to true fidelity, was yet wrenched from Jeanne out of her anguish at the fear of losing someone she desired for herself alone. Jeanne's basic fault is that she is not open, she is not disponible. Her own being is hidden from her eyes, it is veiled in the opacity of her self-centredness. "Ce qui s'oppose ici," Marcel wrote of the initial situation in another play but it applies as much with Jeanne, "c'est bien plutôt l'être opaque et l'être transparent."<sup>64</sup> It is this same measure of indisponibilité which blights the attitude towards suffering and death of the other characters we have considered in the previous section.

#### (c) fidelity and pseudo-fidelity

It may happen that, arising from this egocentrism, a character unconsciously imagines that he is practising charity on behalf of the afflicted or giving witness to his fidelity towards the dead. Should this attitude be tainted by self-interest, the fidelity will be objectified and rendered false. This is the pitfall into which fall both Abel Renaudier and Jacques Delorme in l'Iconoclaste, and also Aline Fortier in la Chapelle ardente and Germain Lestrade in l'Horizon.<sup>65</sup> Perhaps the most complex and at the same time the most ambiguous character in Marcel's theatre who, wilfully or not, suffers from a falsified ideal of fidelity and of the mystique of suffering is Ariane Leprieur in le Chemin de crête.

Ariane returns to Paris, after convalescing in the mountains for several years, for she has received information from an anonymous source that her husband, Jérôme, is having an affair with Violette Mazargue, a young musician. Both Jérôme and Violette have, apparently, sought solace in each other. Jérôme is not just financially dependent upon Ariane, he reveres her but has found that it is difficult to live with a "saint". Violette has already been disappointed in love and has been left with a sickly child. Just as Edmée Lemoyne had not wished to meet Michel Sandier again, Violette does not want to meet her lover's long-suffering wife. In each case they do meet and the consequences are ultimately disastrous. Even in their attitude to suffering, Ariane and Violette differ. For Violette,

suffering stifles her, like being in a tomb; for Ariane suffering is a purgative catalyst which impels her to seemingly sublime acts of selfless generosity. She gives evidence when, to Violette's amazement, she actively encourages the illicit liaison as long as Jérôme does not learn of his wife's connivance. Marcel himself is not prepared to judge Ariane's motives although he does suggest that there is "quelque chose d'inquiétant et d'impur dans l'élan passionné qui la porte vers la maîtresse de son mari."<sup>66</sup>

Violette gradually comes under the influence of Ariane, in much the same way as Mireille submits to Aline. Both Violette and Ariane have a common interest in music and also agree on an interpretation of morality which will justify each other's conduct. Furthermore, as a sign of her friendship and patronage Ariane promises to arrange for free medical care for Monique, Violette's child. When, therefore, Jérôme is irritated by Ariane's continuing and embarrassing presence and proposes divorce in order to legalize his situation with Violette, the latter demurs. Ariane had herself offered "helpful" suggestions and reasons with such questioning provisos as to discourage Violette from marrying an allegedly syco-phantic Jérôme.

Yet in breaking with Jérôme, Violette is confirmed in her suspicions about the motives of Ariane.<sup>67</sup> Like Mireille before Aline, Violette charges Ariane with perfidy. She tells her that she suspects that Ariane had calculated it all, that Ariane's apparent nobility was "le moyen le plus sûr, le seul moyen efficace de me séparer de Jérôme tout en gardant à mes yeux et aux vôtres ce qui était l'essentiel, un rôle d'héroïne ou de sainte."<sup>68</sup> Whatever Ariane's real reasons, this separation is effected. Jérôme returns to the captivating spell of his wife and rejects Violette for having so shamefully accused Ariane of hypocrisy. Ariane is certainly no hypocrite : at no time does she vaunt any pretended superiority over other lesser mortals. But in the end she is forced none the less to examine herself. She insists on accusing herself to Violette (in front of Jérôme) when Violette returns in response to the appeal of a confused Ariane. In her own eyes, Ariane is guilty of partial dishonesty, at least, in her behaviour to Violette and her plea for forgiveness seems sincere. Violette must admit that Ariane was sincere, if misguided.

Je suis sûre que vous parlez du fond de vous-même; mais est-ce que vous ne voyez pas que, si vous jouiez la comédie, que si vous étiez la femme la plus calculatrice et la plus perfide, vous ne pourriez pas vous y prendre plus habilement pour creuser entre Jérôme et moi un abîme infranchissable. (69)

Violette proposes to accept the offer of a cheap impressario and departs, but not before loosing a Parthian shaft. She thanks Ariane for having taught her at least one thing : "la vertu du cynisme."<sup>70</sup>

By the time the play starts, Ariane has recovered from her tubercular condition after a prolonged rest-cure in the mountains. But she appears to have contracted another ailment which is more serious because it affects the soul, the core of one's being. This illness is a kind of inverted spiritual vertigo. As long as she remains physically on the heights, her soul is uplifted as well; she holds herself aloof of the pettiness and jealousies of everyday life in the world which is symbolized by the city. But when she returns to this world, the consequences are not only damaging to herself but to those she tries to help out of the greatness of her soul. She maintains her moral ascendancy but her actions, if not her judgment, are adversely efficacious as if she herself has become giddy from disorientation. The beneficiaries of her attentions are in turn "infected" by this giddiness through contact with one who still appears to be trying to breathe in her familiar rarefied atmosphere. Ariane appears to be inspired by genuine existential concern for others, but something is terribly awry. So convincing is the appearance - which is a distortion of the reality - that even at the end Violette, despite her misgivings, is still bathed in the reflected aura of this pseudo-intersubjective fidelity. Impulsively, she kisses Ariane's hand and asks for her intercession :

Puisque la prière vous a été donnée avec tout le reste  
... priez quelquefois pour moi et pour Monique. (71)

Herein may lie the reason for Ariane's failure to give true witness to Being. For, as Marcel observes, although she appears in many ways a more deserving figure than Claude Lemoyne, Ariane has no God to whom to pray, to whom to appeal for herself and for others. Her only course is to seek some measure of relief in writing her autobiography, but even in this she has no illusions about the value of such an evasion.<sup>72</sup> Without the support of faith she will still be unable to find the true answer to the question of who she really is.

Among the characters who give a more positive witness to the mystery of Being under the test of suffering and death is Werner Schnee in le Dard. Werner recognizes both the ambiguities and dangers of life. For him there are two great temptations : pride in his success and love for another man's wife. In order to avoid yielding to these temptations he is fully prepared to sacrifice himself, not only his interests and ambitions but his life as well. By taking his decision to return to Germany, he hopes to ensure the preservation of his integrity and at the same time gain a far greater possession which is the safety of his being, the salvation of his soul. There is, then, a superior type of possession, which transcends the possessiveness of "having" because its source is inexhaustible : it is being itself.

Etre c'est posséder une certaine plénitude, et par suite  
une certaine assurance. (73)

It is this realization which distinguishes Werner Schnee from Eustache Soreau; it is what makes Werner "rich" and Eustache "poor" in the awareness of the priority of being.<sup>74</sup>

Eustache is not unaware of his "poverty". His guilty consciousness, arising from a sense of betrayal of his socialist ideals in an advantageous marriage and reinforced by the accusing example of Gertrude Heuzard who has sacrificed her own material prospects by sticking to her principles, is an awareness of what he is not. His ontological poverty stems not only from his lack of "stickability" (adhésion) but also, and more importantly, from his impermeability to the presence of others. He suffers, though not with the pathetic egocentrism of Amédée Chartrain. He suffers because, while admitting that wealth and success are only possessions, he cannot communicate with his own wife and with Werner who together are finding their way towards the light of being. Eustache feels that he is being left out; he cannot bear being treated as "un tiers, une troisième personne."<sup>75</sup>

Werner, on the other hand, is "rich" in the possession of being because, by a strange paradox, he is prepared to give himself, to extend "credit" to another. He is open to Béatrice (as she is to him) but more so to his persecuted countrymen to whom he intends to return so that he may share, like Simon Bernauer, the "blessed bread of persecution". Ontological wealth is gained, therefore, through the intermediary of a "thou"; it is vested in participation in the Fellowship of Being. Werner proposes to return so as to help others live. First of all, he extends this aid to Béatrice. He tells her that she cannot abandon Eustache now. (The lesson is particularly acute for him because his own wife has left him for an impressario.) Moreover, the "rich" must not condemn the "poor"; rather they must help them, even if they be never cured of this ontological poverty which is "le plus grand mal de notre temps, il se répand comme une peste."<sup>76</sup> Werner assures Béatrice that she will be sustained in her mission among these "lepers" by a special grace. This grace, he adds, is more a "viaticum"; it is the spiritual sustenance of the true homo viator. It is, in effect, the salvific property of continuing fidelity to presence (meaning the presence of those she loves). She will think of him as he thinks of Rudolf, his former accompanist. In time (perhaps he means after his death) he will "dwell in her" as a living presence. Finally, he reminds her of the true place of the dead whom we love. Their remaining presence and the promise of immortality in reunion saves existence from absurdity and gives life its true meaning.

S'il n'y avait que des vivants, Béatrice, je pense que la terre serait tout à fait inhabitable. (77)

## FOOTNOTES TO APPENDIX 2

1. Interview with La Nation Belge (1947), quoted Sottiaux, op. cit. 11.
2. HdD 61, 93, 97.
3. HdD 24, 30, 41.
4. HdD 155-156. Claude has already been made to appreciate that, through his well-intentioned but professional attitude, he has never really treated Edmée as a person but as a problem. Similarly he had treated Osmonde as a "case" sandwiched between others which all required his professional but impersonal care (HdD 69). When Edmée accuses him, "La femme en moi, tu ne l'as pas satisfaite, tu ne l'as même pas soupçonnée" (HdD 93), he sees the implication that he is not even a man, let alone a husband. Wilting under the constant soul-searching, he cries out: "Tais-toi, tu me détruis!" (HdD 111).
5. And even in this last expression, Claude is not spared the dramatic irony: "des pasteurs comme vous ça ne court pas les rues" (HdD 196).
6. PI 21. As we have seen, this term "Absolute Recourse" as used by Marcel is synonymous with the "Absolute Thou" and has valid meaning only when used in personal terms of God.
7. HdD 199. cf. DH 149 where Marcel observes that at least Claude has the recourse of prayer, whereas the more ambiguous Ariane in le Chemin de crête is left at the end completely in the dark. Her own story is given towards the end of the fourth part of the Appendix. (pp. 235-237)
8. ST 22.
9. EPC 219.
10. ME II 35.
11. HV 201. For Marcel's theory of participation see Chapter 1, pp. 21 - 25.
12. MC 44-45.
13. MC 55.
14. There is really no similarity between the situations of Christiane and Laurent, in the play being considered, and of Edmée and Claude, in Un Homme de Dieu, even though in both instances the pardon serves to alleviate the husband's interior tension.
15. MC 248.
16. MC 250.
17. MC 138.
18. SdI 13.
19. SdI 166.
20. SdI 222.
21. SdI 216-218. Like Jacques Delorme of a much earlier play, l'Iconoclaste (written in 1919-1920), Antoine wants to be assured by tangible "objective" evidence. Jacques wants the best of both worlds: he wants objective proofs of the dead Viviane's presence which, as Abel Renaudier comes to realize, is a mystery to be sustained only by true fidelity, which has its situation in being. See Chapter 5, p. 147. cf. EA I 117, PE 127, PI 13.
22. SdI 241.
23. SdI 240-241, 257-259.
24. SdI 268.

25. RPR 19, 43. Catholicism, which he knows only through the mordant criticisms of his communist friends, appears to Marc-André as at best pharisaical.
26. RPR 44-46, 52, 54.
27. RPR 49-50.
28. RPR 80.
29. RPR 128-129.
30. RPR 177 (Postface).
31. RPR 84. cf. RPR 52.
32. RPR 34, 49, 64. Pascal is constantly reminded of his queasiness by his spiteful wife, Renée (RPR 58-66, 106, 134-140; cf. Chapter 5, fn 80). Pascal's dignity and courage will be revealed in the final scene, but not until he has undergone his purgatory as forewarned by Esther. Marcel himself says (RPR 175 - Postface) that Pascal is no parachutist to warn his countrymen not to follow his example of escapism. The reference to that form of mission reminds us of Bruno in Croissez et Multipliez. Bruno, a Dominican missionary, received his particular appeal when he met, after many years, a Rumanian who had told him of the plight of the Rumanians beyond the Iron Curtain. Rather melodramatically, Bruno intends thereupon to parachute into Rumania French religious who will show the natives that they are not forgotten but still prayed for. "L'appel lancé vers moi," he declares, "il m'a semblé que c'était du ciel qu'il tombait" (CM 174). Bruno would appear to be more a Quixotic figure than the image of him by his sister, Agnès, as a Parsifal (and "un Parsifal imaginaire" at that - CM 173).
33. RPR 92. The emphases are mine. The language of the first part of the passage is remarkably similar to that used by Baudelaire to describe the expectancy of his escapist fellow-travellers in the poem, le Voyage. The conclusion - that death holds the key - is much the same, also.
34. RPR 58. We are reminded of the character of Marie-Henriette Champel in Mon Temps n'est pas le vôtre. She, too, belongs to an "unprovided-for" generation - in the cynical attitude of her father. She is, like Sylvie, redeemed in caring for her abandoned father. See Chapter 5, p. 147, Chapter 6, p. 185.
35. R PR 82.
36. RPR 117-119.
37. RPR 142-143.
38. cf. PACMO 60-61, EPC 22, HP 70.
39. RPR 143.
40. EA I 118. Marcel adds that he sees a classical parallel in the recognition of Ulysses by Eumaeus.
41. EA I 55.
42. RPR 146.
43. HV 69-70. cf. EA I 87 : "Il n'y a pas de vie sans enjeu; la vie n'est pas séparable d'un certain péril."
44. SdI 237. This affirmation echoes the words of Christ, "What does it profit a man to gain the whole world and yet suffer the loss of his soul?"
45. RPR 148.
46. PR-GM 62.
47. MdD 166.

48. Thérèse tries to point out to Germain that he is always looking so far ahead that he cannot see what is needed immediately. He is like a traveller who has settled his itinerary in such detail that he has come home before he sets out. Unfortunately (for him, and consequently for her), she says, there are no "agences pour la conduite de la vie" (l'Horizon, 99-100).
49. CA 95-96.
50. A further character could be Edith Lechevallier who is considered almost immediately in the text.
51. See Chapter 5, pp. 148-149.
52. Just as Mireille gains strength from her own sufferings to pity Aline who caused it (CA 135).
53. Les Coeurs avides (originally entitled la Soif) 146 : "Il te faut des douleurs estampillées, Eveline. (Arnaud is talking to his step-mother.) Il y en a d'autres, comme il existe des maladies non reconnues; et ce ne sont pas les moins affreuses. Je crois quant à moi que papa est un homme extrêmement malheureux, d'autant plus malheureux qu'il communique moins avec son mal. L'espèce de soif indistincte qui le dévore, lui-même ne la reconnaît pas - justement parce qu'elle l'a dévoré." Amédée's melancholy may stem from the bitter memory of his first wife (and mother of Arnaud and Stella) who had tried to poison him and had been, for that, committed to an asylum.
54. Les Coeurs avides 135. (Emphases mine.)
55. PI 215-218. Robert's enlightenment on the qualities of the "real" Maurice is also aided by certain remarks of his other brother Gustave (PI 215-216) and by his mother (PI 212-213, 219-220).
56. PI 8.
57. The conversation does not get away to a promising start when the abbé declares that modern women have too much leisure (and that play was written in 1919!). The rift between the two cracks open when the abbé ascribes Edith's suffering to a disregard for her religious exercises. And when he aggravates her chagrin by insisting that these exercises are very important for her who is a woman who thinks too much, Edith retorts, "Parce qu'elles empêchent de penser!" (PI 223).
58. PI 224.
59. PI 225. (Edith is speaking of the dead Maurice who loved her yet not in a "sinful" way.)
60. PI 228. In this respect the abbé's professional attitude is like that of other characters who wish to keep the dead dead. Jeanne Framont treats her husband as already dead, Madame Ferrier treats Clément like a machine, and Aline Fortier's memory of Raymond is as inanimate as his photograph.
61. PI 229, 231.
62. PI 233.
63. MdD 161.
64. PACMO 86. Originally, this famous treatise was published as an appendix to the play, le Monde cassé.
65. Germain's action of offering his wife Thérèse to his friend Bernard (which involves the separation of Bernard and Valentine) in order to prevent her from throwing herself at Marc Villars can be contrasted with Polyeucte's générosité towards his "rival" Sévère to safeguard the future happiness of Pauline, in Corneille's play, Polyeucte.
66. DH 148.

67. These suspicions may have been helped by the observations of Ariane's brother, Philip Varet. Philip has said that, for Ariane, art is a means to an end; she is not easy to know. Earlier he had confronted Ariane with a possible explanation for her interest in the suffering of others. He insinuates that she becomes interested in people only when they upset others or are upset by them. He ascribes her interference as a need to assert herself, and claims that she cannot stand barriers. Somehow or other, he warns her, she will want to "worm" her way right into the affair between Jérôme and Violette. Philip tries to warn Violette that Ariane's taste for "peculiar" relationships has in it something of an unconscious perversion.
68. CdC 241.
69. CdC 246.
70. CdC 247.
71. *ibid.*
72. DH 150 : "... car la littérature n'est qu'une évasion et par là cette tragédie de l'ambiguïté se clôt sur le même appel qu'Un Homme de Dieu - appel inarticulé et qu'aucune foi n'aimante."
73. J. Chenu, Le Théâtre de Gabriel Marcel et sa signification métaphysique, 200.
74. See Chapter 5, p. 150.
75. SdI 17. Marcel adds, "et je remarque en passant qu'il y a ici une illustration particulièrement significative d'un des thèmes fondamentaux de ma réflexion philosophique." We may compare also the situation in Rome n'est plus dans Rome where Renée is left out while her husband Pascal and her sister Esther seem to be progressing together in an ontological communion.
76. Le Dard 117.
77. Le Dard 118. Actually, he had first addressed these words to his wife Gisela who was incapable of comprehending their significance (le Dard 87). cf. Saint Paul, I Corinthians 15: 19 - "If our hope in Christ has been for this life only we are the most unfortunate of people." And both these phrases - from Marcel's play and from Saint Paul - sum up Marcel's whole "philosophy of existence" in that it is the expression of an option, that life has meaning when we acknowledge that our very being is oriented towards transcendence and, therefore, towards ultimate fulfilment in the ontological communion established in God.



# B I B L I O G R A P H Y

## 1. PRIMARY SOURCES (Works of Marcel)

in chronological order of composition.

### (A) Philosophical Treatises.

Fragments philosophiques, 1909-1914. Louvain-Paris, Nauwelaerts (coll. "Philosophes contemporains"), 1961, 116 p.

Journal métaphysique (1914-1923). Paris, Gallimard (coll. "Idées"), 1927, xi + 342 p. Preface by Marcel to the English translation by B. Wall (Metaphysical Journal), London, Rockliff, 1952, vii-xiii.

La Métaphysique de Royce. Paris, Aubier, (coll. "Philosophie de l'esprit"), 1945, 224 p. Originally four articles published in la Revue de Métaphysique et de Morale, 1917-1918.

Etre et avoir (1928-1933). Paris, Aubier, 1935, 337 p. Republished by Aubier ("Foi Vivante" series), 1968, in two volumes -

I : Journal métaphysique, 220 p. (text used),

II : Réflexions sur l'irréligion et la foi, 121 p. (text used).

Position et approches concrètes du mystère ontologique (with an introduction by Marcel de Corte), Louvain-Paris, Nauwelaerts (coll. "Philosophes contemporains"), 1967, 91 p. Originally appeared as appendix to the play, le Monde cassé, 1933.

Essai de philosophie concrète. Paris, Gallimard (coll. "Idées"), 1967, 376 p. Formerly Du Refus à l'invocation, same publishers, 1940, 326 p.

Homo Viator : Prolégomènes à une métaphysique de l'espérance. Paris, Aubier (coll. "Philosophie de l'esprit"), 1944, 358 p. Enlarged edition, same publishers, 1963, 369 p. (text used).

Le Mystère de l'Etre (Gifford Lectures, 1950-1951). Paris, Aubier (coll. "Philosophie de l'esprit"),

I : Réflexion et mystère, 1951, 235 p.

II : Foi et réalité, 1951, 188 p.

Présence et immortalité (1951). Contains metaphysical diary, 1938-1943. Paris, Flammarion (coll. "Homo Sapiens"), 1959, 234 p.

Les Hommes contre l'humain. Paris, Colombe, 1951, 206 p.; Paris, Fayard, 1968, 206 p. (text used).

L'Homme problématique. Paris, Aubier, 1955 and 1968, 187 p.

Théâtre et religion. Lyon, Vitte (coll. "Parvis"), 1959, 107 p.

La Dignité humaine et ses assises existentielles (James Lectures, 1961). Paris, Aubier (coll. "Présences et pensée"), 1964, 219 p.

Searchings. New York, Newman, 1967, vii + 118 p. Originally appeared as Auf der Suche nach Wahrheit und Gerechtigkeit, Freiburg, Knecht, 1964.

Paix sur la terre. Paris, Aubier, 1965, 176 p.

Entretiens Paul Ricoeur - Gabriel Marcel. Paris, Aubier (coll. "Présences et pensée"), 1968, 130 p.

Pour une sagesse tragique et son au-delà. Paris, Plon, 1968, 310 p.

## (B) Articles.

- "Aperçus sur la liberté" in la Nef, 1946, No. VI, pp. 67-74.
- "Existence and Human Freedom" in The Philosophy of Existentialism (tr. M. Harari), New York, Citadel, 1966, pp. 47-90. Original : "L'existence et la liberté humaine chez J-P. Sartre" in Les grands appels de l'homme contemporain, Paris, Temps Présent, 1946, pp. 113-170.
- "Testimony and Existentialism" in The Philosophy of Existentialism (q.v.), pp. 91-103. Original : "Le témoignage comme localisation de l'existentiel" in La Nouvelle Revue Théologique, 1946, 68, pp. 182-191.
- "Regard en arrière" in Existentialisme chrétien : Gabriel Marcel, ed. E. Gilson, Paris, Plon (coll. "Présences"), 1947, pp. 291-319. Appears in translation as "An Essay in Autobiography" in The Philosophy of Existentialism (q.v.), pp. 104-128.
- "Theism and Personal Relationships" in Crosscurrents, 1950, pp. 35-42.
- "Structure de l'espérance" in Dieu Vivant, No. 19, 1951.
- "Notes pour une philosophie de l'amour" in Revue de Métaphysique et de Morale, vol. 59 (1954), pp. 374-379.
- "Réponse à une enquête sur l'idée de Dieu" in Age Nouveau, 1955, No. 90, pp. 39-44.
- "Le crépuscule du sens commun", appendix to the comedy, La Dimension Florestan, Paris, Plon, 1958, pp. 170-212.
- "Philosophical Atheism" in International Philosophical Quarterly, 1962, 2, pp. 501-513.
- "Some reflections on existentialism" in Philosophy Today, 1964, vol. 8, 4/4, pp. 248-257.
- "Solipsism Surmounted" in Philosophy Today, 1966, vol. 10, 3/4, pp. 204-211.
- "Le secret est dans les îles" in Le Secret est dans les îles, (essay and three plays), Paris, Plon, 1967, pp. 7-24.
- "La dominante existentielle dans mon oeuvre" in Contemporary Philosophy, ed. R. Klibansky, Firenze, la Nuova Italia, 1969, vol. III, pp. 171-176.

## (C) Theatre.

- Le Seuil invisible. Paris, Grasset, 1914. Contains la Grâce (1911) and le Palais de sable (1913).
- Le Quatuor en fa dièse (1916-1917). Paris, Plon, 1925.
- Un Juste (1918) in Paix sur la terre (q.v.), pp. 61-176.
- L'Insondable (1919) in Présence et immortalité (q.v.), pp. 195-234.
- Le Mort de demain (1919), la Chapelle ardente (1919-1920) and le Regard neuf (1919-1920) in Trois Pièces, Paris, Plon, 1931.
- La Chapelle ardente, Paris, Table Ronde, 1950, 253 p. (text used).
- L'Iconoclaste (1919-1920), Paris, Stock, 47 p.
- Le Coeur des autres (1920). Paris, Grasset, 1921.
- Un Homme de Dieu (1922). Paris, Table Ronde, 215p.

- L'Horizon (1928). Paris, Aux étudiants de France, 1945.
- Le Monde cassé. Paris, Desclée de Brouwer, 1933.
- Le Chemin de crête. Paris, Grasset, 1936.
- Le Dard. Paris, Plon, 1936, 118 p. (text used); also in Le Secret est dans les îles (q.v.), pp. 25-153.
- Le Fanal. Paris, Stock, 1936.
- Les Coeurs avides (originally la Soif) (1938). Paris, Table Ronde, 1952, 159 p.
- L'Emissaire. Paris, Table Ronde, 1949; also in Le Secret est dans les îles (q.v.), pp. 155-270 (text used).
- Le Signe de la Croix (1949). Paris, Plon, 1960, 181 p.
- La Fin des temps (1950 radio play) in Le Secret est dans les îles (q.v.), pp. 271-349.
- Rome n'est plus dans Rome. Paris, Table Ronde, 1951, 178 p.
- Croissez et multipliez. Paris, Plon, 1955, 213 p.
- Mon Temps n'est pas le vôtre. Paris, Plon, 1955, 248 p.
- La Prune et la prunelle in L'Avant-scène, Paris, 1960 (August), pp. 32-37.

## 2. SECONDARY SOURCES (Studies on Marcel)

### (A) Books.

- BAGOT, Jean-Pierre, Connaissance et Amour : Essai sur la philosophie de Gabriel Marcel, Paris, Beauchesne, 1958, 248 p.
- BLACKHAM, H.J., Six Existentialist Thinkers, London, Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1961, vii + 179 p. Chapter on Marcel, pp. 66-85.
- BOLLNOW, Otto, Französischer Existentialismus, Stuttgart, Kohlhammer, 1965. Two chapters on Marcel, "Christlicher Existentialismus: Gabriel Marcel", pp. 74-117, and "Gabriel Marcel: Geheimnis des Seins", pp. 149-166.
- BREISACH, Ernst, Introduction to Modern Existentialism, New York, Grove, 1962, viii + 247 p. Section on Marcel, pp. 150-159.
- CAIN, Seymour, Gabriel Marcel, London, Bowes and Bowes, 1963, 128 p.
- CHENU, Joseph, Le Théâtre de Gabriel Marcel et sa signification métaphysique, Paris, Aubier, 1948, 227 p.
- COLLINS, James, The Existentialists : A critical study, Chicago, Regnery, 1952, 300 p. Chapter on Marcel, pp. 128-167.
- De CORTE, Marcel, Introduction to Position et approches (q.v.), pp. 9-43;  
 ← La Philosophie de Gabriel Marcel, Paris, Téqui, 1937, 105 p.
- GALLAGHER, Kenneth T., The Philosophy of Gabriel Marcel, New York, Fordham U.P., 1962, xvi + 179 p. Foreword by Gabriel Marcel, xiii - xvi.
- GRENE, Marjorie, Introduction to Existentialism (formerly The Dreadful Freedom), Chicago, U.P., 1959, vii + 149 p. Section on Marcel, pp. 122-140.

- ALEXANDER, Yann, "La philosophie de Gabriel Marcel" in Biblio, 1965, vol. 33, No. 7, pp. 11-15.
- BALLARD, Edward G., "Gabriel Marcel : The Mystery of Being" in Existential Philosophers : Kierkegaard to Merleau-Ponty, ed. G.A. Schrader, New York, McGraw-Hill, 1967, pp. 209-260.
- BERTMAN, Martin A., "Gabriel Marcel on Hope" in Philosophy Today, 1970, vol. 14, 2/4, pp. 101-105.
- BERTOCCI, Peter A., "Descartes and Marcel on the person and his body; a critique" in Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society, 1967-1968, vol. LXVIII, pp. 207-226.
- BLAIN, Lionel A., "Marcel's Logic in Proving the Existence of God" in International Philosophical Quarterly, vol. IX, June 1969, pp. 177-204.
- CHAIGNE, Louis, "Un homme constamment en route" in Biblio, 1965, vol. 33, No. 7, pp. 6-10.
- COLIN, Pierre, "Existentialisme chrétien" in Existentialisme chrétien: Gabriel Marcel, Paris, Plon, 1947, pp. 11-115.
- CRCMP, Germaine, "Le rapport âme-corps chez le premier Marcel" in Dialogue, vol. VIII, 1969, No. 3, pp. 445-459.
- DELHOMME, Jeanne, "Témoignage et Dialectique" in Existentialisme chrétien : Gabriel Marcel, Paris, Plon, 1947, pp. 117-201.
- DUBOIS-DUMÉE, J-P., "Solitude et communion dans le théâtre de Gabriel Marcel" in Existentialisme chrétien : Gabriel Marcel, Paris, Plon, 1947, pp. 269-290.
- FITZGERALD, Eugene J., "Gabriel Marcel" in Existential Thinkers and Thought, ed. F. Patka, New York, Philosophical Library, 1962, pp. 138-150.
- GALLAGHER, Kenneth T., "La pensée créatrice : Marcel et Heidegger" in Dialogue, vol. VIII, 1969, No. 1, pp. 22-43.
- GARRIC, Robert, "L'universalité de Gabriel Marcel" in Biblio, 1965, vol. 33, No. 7, pp. 3-5.
- GERBER, Rudolph J., "Marcel and the Experiential Road to Metaphysics" in Philosophy Today, 1968, vol. 12, 4/4, pp. 262-281.
- "Marcel's phenomenology of the human body" in International Philosophical Quarterly, vol. IV, 1964, pp. 443-463.
- GILSON, Etienne, "Un exemple" in Existentialisme chrétien : Gabriel Marcel, Paris, Plon, 1947, pp. 1-9.
- HOCKING, William E., "Marcel and the Ground Issues of Metaphysics" in Philosophy and Phenomenological Research, vol. XIV, No. 4, 1954, pp. 429-469.
- JARRETT-KERR, M., "Gabriel Marcel on Faith and Unbelief" in The Hibbert Journal, vol. 45, 1946-1947, pp. 321-326.
- LUTHER, Arthur, "Marcel's Metaphysics of the WE ARE" in Philosophy Today, 1966, vol. 10, 3/4, pp. 190-203.
- MCCARTHY, Donald, "Marcel's Absolute Thou" in Philosophy Today, 1966, vol. 10, 3/4, pp. 175-181.
- O'HARA, Sister M. Kevin, "Person in the Philosophy of Gabriel Marcel" in Philosophy Today, 1964, vol. 8, 3/4, pp. 147-154.
- PAMPLUME, Louis, "Gabriel Marcel : Existence, Being and Faith" in Yale French Studies, No. 12 : God and the Writer, New York, Kraus, 1965, pp. 88-100.

- PAX, C.V., "Philosophical Reflection : Gabriel Marcel" in The New Scholasticism, 1964, vol. 38, pp. 159-177.
- SCHMID, Carlo, "Laudatio" in Paix sur la terre (q.v.), pp. 15-39.
- SWEENEY, Leo, "Gabriel Marcel's Position on God" in The New Scholasticism, 1970, vol. 44, No. 1, pp. 101-124.
- TROISFONTAINES, Roger, "La notion de présence chez Gabriel Marcel" in Existentialisme chrétien : Gabriel Marcel, Paris, Plon, 1947, pp. 203-267.

### 3. TERTIARY SOURCES (Philosophy in general)

- ANDERSON, James F., St Augustine and Being : A metaphysical essay, The Hague, Nijhoff, 1965, viii + 76 p.
- BAILLIE, D.M., Faith in God, London, Faber, 1964 (reprint), 308 p.
- BAILLIE, John, Our Knowledge of God, London, O.U.P., 1959, 263 p.
- The Sense of the Presence of God, London, O.U.P., 1962, 269 p.
- BAUM, Gregory, (ed.) The Future of Belief Debate, New York, Herder, 1967, 232 p.
- CARLO, William E., The Ultimate Reducibility of Essence to Existence in Existential Metaphysics, The Hague, Nijhoff, 1966, xviii + 150 p.
- CASSERLEY, J.V.L., The Christian in Philosophy, London, Faber, 1949, 266 p.
- The Retreat from Christianity in the Modern World, London, Longmans Green, 1952, 178 p.
- COPLESTON, Frederick C., Contemporary Philosophy : Studies in logical positivism and existentialism, London, Burns and Oates, 1965, ix + 230 p.
- A History of Philosophy, vol. 2, Part I : Medieval Philosophy, Augustine to Bonaventure, 346 p.; Part II : Medieval Philosophy, Albert the Great to Duns Scotus, 352 p., New York, Image (Doubleday), 1962.
- DELFGAAUW, Bernard, Twentieth Century Philosophy (tr. N.D. Smith), Dublin, Gill and Macmillan, 1969, vi + 174 p.
- DEMSKE, James M., Being, Man & Death : A Key to Heidegger, Univ. Press of Kentucky, 1970, 234 p.
- DEWART, Leslie, The Future of Belief : Theism in a world come of age, London, Burns and Oates, 1967, 223 p.
- FAUSSET, Hugh I'A., Towards Fidelity, London, Gollancz, 1952, 237 p.
- FOULQUIE, Paul, L'Existentialisme, Paris, Presses universitaires de France, 1947, 125 p.
- GILSON, Etienne, God and Philosophy, New Haven, Yale U.P., 1941, xviii + 147 p.

- HICK, John, Christianity at the Centre, London, SCM, 1968, 124 p.
- Evil and the God of Love, London, Macmillan, 1966, 403 p.
- HILDEBRAND, Dietrich von, Trojan Horse in the City of God, Chicago, Franciscan Herald, 1967, xiii + 263 p.
- HOCKING, William E., The Meaning of God in Human Experience : A philosophical study of religion, New Haven, Yale U.P., 1924, xxxiv + 586 p.
- JANSEN, G.M.A., An Existential Approach to Theology, Milwaukee, Bruce, 1966, x + 128 p.
- LEPP, Ignace, A Christian Philosophy of Existence (tr. L. Soiron), Dublin, Gill (Logos), 1965, 160 p.
- LUBAC, Henri de, The Discovery of God (tr. A. Dru), London, Darton, Longmans and Todd, 1960, 212 p.
- LUIJPEN, William A., Existential Phenomenology, Pittsburgh, Duquesne U.P., 1960, 362 p.
- Phenomenology of Atheism, Pittsburgh, Duquesne U.P., 1964, 344 p.
- MACQUARRIE, John, Studies in Christian Existentialism, McGill, SCM, 1965, 278 p.
- MARITAIN, Jacques, Approaches to God (tr. P. O'Reilly), London, Allen and Unwin, 1955, 102 p.
- Existence and the Existent : An essay on Christian Existentialism (tr. L. Galantiere and G.B. Whelan), New York, Image (Doubleday), 1956, 153 p.
- The Peasant of the Garonne : An old layman questions himself about the present time (tr. M. Cuddihy and E. Hughes), London, Geoffrey Chapman, 1968, ix + 277 p.
- MASCALL, E. Lionel, Existence and Analogy : A sequel to "He Who Is", London, Longmans Green, 1949, 188 p.
- The Openness of Being : Natural Theology Today, London, Darton, Longman and Todd, 1971, xiii + 278 p.
- Words and Images : A study in theological discourse, London, Longmans Green, 1957, xi + 132 p.
- MOUNIER, Emmanuel, Existential Philosophies : An introduction (tr. E. Blow), London, Rockliff, 1948, vii + 142 p.
- OWEN, H.P., The Christian Knowledge of God, London, Athlone, 1969, 340 p.
- PIEPER, Josef, Death and Immortality (tr. R. and C. Winston), London, Burns and Oates / Herder and Herder, 1969, 144 p.
- PONTIFEX, Mark and TRETHOWAN, Illtyd, The Meaning of Existence : A metaphysical enquiry, London, Longmans Green, 1953, 179 p.
- RICHMOND, James, Theology and Metaphysics, London, SCM, 1970, xii + 156 p.
- RINTELEN, J. von, Beyond Existentialism (tr. H. Graef), London, Allen and Unwin, 1961, 264 p.
- ROBINSON, J.A.T., Honest to God, London, SCM, 1963, 143 p.
- SINARI, Ramakant, Reason in Existentialism, Bombay, Popular Prakashan, 1966, ix + 264 P.
- SMITH, John E., Experience and God, New York, O.U.P., 1968, 209 p.

- TILLICH, Paul, The Courage to Be, London, Collins (Fontana)  
1967, 189 p.
- The Shaking of the Foundations, London, Penguin,  
1964, 185 p.
- TRETHOWAN, Illyd, Absolute Value : A Study in Christian Theism,  
London, Allen and Unwin, 1970, 255 p.
- An Essay in Christian Philosophy, London,  
Longmans Green, 1954, 186 p.
- The Absolute and the Atonement, London,  
Allen and Unwin, 1971, 289 p.
- TROISFONTAINES, Roger, Existentialisme et Pensée chrétienne,  
Louvain-Paris, Nauwelaerts-Vrin, 1948 (2nd edition with  
additions), 120 p.

## I N D E X

(numbers refer to pages)

- Absolute Knowledge : 78.  
 abstraction : 22, 36, 45, 53, 60, 78, 127, 177, 192, 194.  
 "absurdisme" : 7, 20, 22, 175, 181, 188, 195, 210, 238.  
 adoration : 76.  
agape : 159.  
 agnosticism : 43, 60, 63, 71, 87, 95.  
 Alquié, F. : 38.  
 Altizer, T. : 65.  
 analysis (objective) : 18, 68, 165.  
 Anaximander : 213.  
 Anderson, J. : 221-222.  
 anguish : 17, 33, 45, 104, 118, 169, 191, 195.  
 Anselm, Saint : 74, 83, 94, 96, 101, 132, 138, 209.  
 anthropocentrism : 17, 63, 64, 206.  
 appeal : 16, 19, 85, 87-88, 97, 112, 123-124, 143, 160, 193, 203, 211,  
           226, 227, 228.  
 Aquinas, Saint Thomas : 31, 39, 72, 77, 89, 93-96, 101-102, 107, 127,  
           181, 206, 212-216, 218.  
 Aristotle : 40, 63,       181, 212.  
 aseity : 108, 127, 143.  
 assent : 116-117.  
 atheism : 48, 75, 77, 78, 95, 104, 113-115, 118, 130-131, 134, 197.  
 Augustine, Saint : 33, 63, 69, 83, 92, 98, 101, 109-110, 128, 130, 134,  
           138, 155, 173, 206, 212, 216-219, 221-222.  
 autonomy : 50, 163, 169.  
 axiology : 18.  
  
 "Bad faith" : 74, 104, 112-113, 117, 130, 223.  
 Baillie, D.M. : 132.  
 Baillie, J. : 172.  
 Baudelaire, Ch. : 31, 168, 175, 193, 240.  
 being : passim.  
 "believing in/that" : 111, 136, 143, 171.  
 Benda, J. : 63.  
 Bénézé, M. : 40.  
 Berdyaev, N. : 42, 52.  
 Bergson, H. : 36, 53, 109, 145, 203.



- Berlinger, R. : 221.  
 Bertocci, P.A. : 222.  
 Blain, L.A. : 133, 210.  
 Blondel, M. : 53, 130, 194.  
 Böhme, J. : 37.  
 Bollnow, O. : 36, 72.  
 Bonaventure, Saint : 80, 109-110, 128, 206.  
 Bradley, F.H. : 109.  
 Braithwaite, R.B. : 38.  
 Brentano, F. : 114, 132.  
 Brunschvicg, L. : 36, 200.  
 Buber, M. : 34, 98.  
 Byron, G.G. Lord : 199.
- Cain, S. : 37, 99, 166.  
 Camus, A. : 30, 175, 201.  
 Carlo, W.E. : 71, 93, 209, 220.  
 Catholicism : 16-17, 32-33, 49, 52, 240.  
 causality : 64, 76-77, 95, 123, 206, 212, 216.  
 certitude : 104, 131.  
Chapelle ardente, la : 99, 130, 146, 186, 231, 232.  
 charity : 7, 56, 119, 160; see "intersubjectivity", "love".  
 charm : 86.  
Chemin de crête, le : 99, 122, 231, 235-237, 239, 242.  
 Chenu, J. : 11, 242.  
 choice : 50, 52, 55-56, 67, 91, 104-107, 116, 133, 162, 177, 213.  
 Christ, J. : 52, 90, 101, 111, 126, 139, 153, 164, 169, 172, 187, 192-193, 202, 203, 230, 240, 242.  
 Christianity : 37, 38, 44, 51-53, 72, 88, 164, 171, 192.  
 Church : 52, 67, 134, 170.  
 Claudel, P. : 46, 65, 120, 135, 173, 201, 209, 230.  
 Clement of Alexandria, Saint : 187, 201.  
 Cochrane, A.C. : 72.  
Cœur des autres, le : 31, 198.  
Cœurs avides, les : 31, 98, 100, 135, 189, 202, 231, 232-233, 241.  
 co-existence (co-presence) : 23, 81, 98, 160, 193-194.  
 Coleridge, S.T. : 127.  
 Colin, P. : 97.  
 Collingwood, R.G. : 31-32.  
 commitment : 20, 24, 36-37, 40, 50, 58, 104-105, 120, 125-126, 140, 141, 144-145, 147, 194, 196, 203, 229.

- communion, ontological : 16, 23, 27, 37-38, 54, 56, 86, 108, 129, 141,  
 160, 174-175, 189, 193, 210, 218, 225-226, 242.
- Comte, A. : 64.
- "concrete" : 22, 38, 96, 102, 104, 112, 125, 127, 140, 154, 163, 165, 174,  
 181, 209.
- Congar, Y. : 67.
- consecration : 6, 20, 45, 182, 201, 203, 207.
- constancy : 141-142, 165.
- conversion : 11, 15, 17, 19, 46, 85, 87, 120, 135, 182, 208, 215, 229.
- conviction : 104, 131.
- Copleston, F.C. : 72, 95, 175, 198.
- Corneille, P. : 241.
- courage : 157-158, 170-171.
- creation : 27, 29, 34, 37, 39, 68, 76, 82, 127, 163, 167, 170, 196, 206-207,  
 210, 215, 218.
- creationism : 128.
- creativity : 20, 27, 29, 40, 51-52, 57, 77, 100, 115, 117, 144, 180,  
 206-207, 218.
- creature (man as) : 15, 51, 67, 144, 170, 206, 208.
- "credit" : 25, 38, 110, 117, 125, 156, 210.
- Croissez et multipliez : 124, 198, 240.
- Crump, G. : 37.
- 
- Daly, C.B. : 210.
- Damascene, Saint John : 77, 96.
- Daniel-Rops, H. : 45.
- Dard, le : 32, 98-99, 135, 137, 149-150, 166, 167, 171, 199, 200, 231,  
 234, 237-238, 242.
- death : 164, 174-183, 188, 190, 192, 194, 197-200, 229, 231-238.  
 - , transcendence of : 176-180, 188, 196-197.
- "Death-of-God" : 47-48, 65, 78.
- De Bono, E. : 68.
- De Corte, M. : 212, 219.
- deism : 43, 63.
- Delhomme, J. : 68.
- Demske, J.M. : 198.
- Descartes, R. (Cartesianism) : 24, 26, 34, 54, 81, 110, 129, 181.
- desire : 169.
- despair : 13, 17, 128, 134, 152-154, 156, 161, 163, 168, 174-175, 181, 191,  
 197, 228.
- devil, (the) : 128.

Dewart, L. : 63, 98, 126.

Dilthey, W. : 36, 63.

disponibilité : 46-47, 56, 59, 70, 83, 85-86, 89, 91, 105, 107-108, 119,  
122, 184, 186-189, 208, 226, 227, 234-235.

Dore, C. : 135.

doubt : 103, 131.

dreams : 198.

Du Bos, Ch. : 26.

Duns Scotus : 74.

dyadic (relations) : 81, 89, 91, 98 ; see "I-thou relationships".

Earle, W., Edie, J.M., and Wild, J. : 72.

Ebner : 72.

egocentrism : 19, 24, 37, 51, 108, 125, 158, 160, 182, 208, 218, 227.

elitism : 7, 15, 34, 129, 138, 184.

Emissaire, l' : 21, 100, 130, 132, 136, 137, 169, 170, 189, 201, 227,  
231, 234.

encounter : 82, 91, 130, 194, 230.

Engels, F. : 43, 63.

Epimenides of Cnossos : 165.

epistemology : 53, 61, 68, 93-94, 103, 112.

"essence" : 39, 54, 64, 68, 70, 77, 218, 220.

eternity : 26, 66, 152, 160, 161, 172, 179-180, 189, 196.

event : 176, 178, 189.

evil : 34, 45, 108, 118-120, 134-135, 197, 218.

exigential inference : 80, 89.

existence : 23, 36, 39, 45, 58, 60, 75-78, 83, 86, 109, 114-115, 129, 137,  
145, 164, 207, 213, 215, 218, 225.

existentialism : 6, 11, 30, 61, 64, 93, 174-175, 195, 198.

experience : 22-23, 26, 37-38, 43, 60, 72, 75, 78, 88, 92, 94, 96, 98-99,  
106, 111, 132, 140, 178.

Faith : 7, 16-17, 24, 28, 41, 43, 47, 51, 56, 65, 68, 82, 88, 92, 95, 101,  
103-126, 127-138, 143, 146, 153, 162, 165, 174, 180, 191, 195-196,  
205, 208, 215.

- of others : 61, 104, 120-122.

family : 166-167.

Fanal, le : 185.

Farmer, H.H. : 101.

Farrer, A.M. : 73.

fatherhood : 86, 144.

Fénelon, F. de Salignac de la Mothe : 26, 42, 43.

Feuerbach, L. : 43, 63.

Fichte, J.G. : 36.

fideism : 104, 115-117, 132.

fidelity : 7, 26, 34, 47, 81, 102, 104, 110, 124-126, 129, 139-150, 163,  
165-167, 177-178, 183-185, 188, 190, 195, 199, 217, 226, 233-234,  
235-239.

- , creative : 14, 27, 120, 142-145, 151, 166, 184.

Fin des temps, la : 56, 134, 168, 231.

finitude : 17, 26, 39, 65, 175.

Forster, E.M. : 137.

freedom : 21-22, 28, 35, 47, 50-52, 66-67, 76, 86, 104, 106, 108, 110, 112,  
127-129, 133, 138, 177-178, 180, 191, 196, 205, 211, 216.

- and grace : 22, 35, 47, 51, 67, 86-87, 92, 106-108.

free-will : 106.

Fromm, E. : 170.

function : 24, 56.

fundamental option : 7, 104-106, 107, 108, 110, 181, 195, 208.

Gallagher, K.T. : 12, 30, 37, 39, 97, 165, 210.

Geiger, L-B. : 39-40, 210.

Gilson, E. : 39, 45, 62, 65, 72, 95, 211, 218, 219, 221.

God, as Absolute Thou : 11, 24, 52, 60, 79, 83, 86-87, 88-90, 94, 98, 105,  
108, 110-112, 115, 117, 119, 122-123, 125, 129, 136, 140-143, 145,  
151, 158-160, 162-163, 172, 187, 195, 203, 207-208, 211, 239.

- as Absolute Recourse : 60, 87, 90, 100, 105, 110, 123, 143, 157-158,  
207, 239.

- as Being : 7, 11, 17, 27, 29, 37, 69, 77, 89-90, 100, 111, 115, 138,  
143, 154, 164, 196-197, 207-208.

- as Creator : 20, 27, 29, 34, 41, 43, 76, 82, 84, 92, 140, 144, 155,  
196, 206-208.

- as Freedom : 211.

- as Life : 210.

- as Light : 55, 101, 155, 157, 192.

- as Love : 25, 76, 160, 164, 181.

- as Presence : 24, 81-82, 86, 88, 91, 98-99, 123, 143, 170, 203.

- as Reality : 25, 61, 106, 108, 112, 168, 203.

- as Transcendent : 25, 52, 79, 90, 92, 95, 140, 161, 166, 174, 194, 197.

- as Truth : 55, 69, 86.

- , need for : 6, 43, 125.

grace : 22, 33-34, 47, 51, 56, 77, 84, 86-87, 91-92, 105, 110, 119-120, 126,  
132, 136, 147, 149-150, 165, 169, 182, 192, 195, 199, 214, 226,  
227-231, 238.

Grâce, la : 120-121, 122, 135.

gratitude : 17, 20, 86, 90.

Gregory of Nyssa, Saint : 193, 203, 217.

Grene, M. : 30.

Gusdorf, G. : 63.

Hamilton, W. : 65.

Hartshorne, Ch. : 63.

Hauptmann, G. : 201.

"having" : 37, 40, 62, 99, 124, 131, 142, 163, 171, 176, 181-182, 186-187,  
199, 226, 227, 230, 232-234.

Hegel, F. : 32, 63, 78, 192.

Heidegger, M. : 37, 59, 71, 76, 175, 177, 189, 197-198, 209.

hell : 128, 153.

heuristic : 11, 62, 73.

Hick, J. : 135, 137, 222.

Hildebrand, D. von. : 33.

historicity : 44, 101.

Hocking, W.E. : 32, 98, 109, 113, 130, 205.

holiness : 61, 89, 219.

Homme de Dieu, Un : 13, 31, 99, 121, 135, 201, 223-224, 226, 239, 242.

"homo viator" : 15, 62, 161, 258.

honour : 18, 20, 34.

hope : 7, 24, 56, 65, 88, 102, 124, 126, 140, 150-162, 167, 169-171, 176,  
177, 182-183, 191-192, 196, 199, 203, 229.

Horizon, l' : 231, 232, 241.

Hugh of St. Victor : 16, 32, 99, 221.

humility : 26, 39, 87, 90, 124, 142, 158, 171.

Husserl, E. : 22, 97, 114.

hyperphenomenology : 79-81, 94, 97, 191, 199.

Iconoclaste, l' : 31, 32, 68, 122, 147, 167, 186, 231, 235, 239.

idealism : 43, 69, 93, 109, 110, 176, 179, 193, 209.

identity (Thomist principle of) : 213.

immortality : 7, 38, 120, 126, 155, 159, 162, 164, 169, 172, 174, 179-180,  
181-196, 199.

incarnation : 23, 36-37, 136.

Incarnation, the : 16, 37, 44, 59.

individuality : 5, 93, 108, 127, 209.

inferential knowledge : 79-80.

Insondable, l' : 67, 167, 190, 198, 231, 233-234, 241.

intellect : 100, 104, 117, 133, 214.

intentionality : 22, 114-115, 132, 152.  
intersubjectivity : 23, 24, 60, 77, 81, 118, 124, 142, 156, 160, 163, 188,  
196, 208.  
intuition : 55, 79-80, 84, 91, 97, 214.  
invocation : 22, 60, 81, 87-89, 100, 123, 151, 152; see "appeal", "prayer".  
irreligion : 33, 63.  
I-thou relationships : 11, 19, 50, 81, 91, 150, 162-164, 190, 208, 210.

James, W. : 100.  
Jansenism : 67, 129.  
Jaspers, K. : 24, 76.  
Jenkins, D.E. : 71.  
John, Saint : 101, 102, 164, 172, 200, 202.  
joy : 86, 118, 162, 188-189.  
judgment : 20, 58, 75, 95, 100, 123, 133-134, 169, 197.  
Juste, Un : 121, 134, 231.  
justice : 159, 229.

Kant, I. : 37, 83, 95, 115, 209, 213.  
Keats, J. : 32, 64, 135.  
Kierkegaard, S. : 32, 63, 67, 95, 117, 119, 126, 153, 169, 192, 210.  
"kingdom", ("other") : 62, 120, 148, 152, 159, 161, 164, 179, 193, 227, 228,  
230, 232.  
knowledge : 43, 63, 71, 80, 92, 94, 112, 213.  
Knox, R.A. : 66, 70.

Lavelle, L. : 72, 133, 194.  
Le Senne, R. : 93, 194.  
Lewis, H.D. : 39.  
life, Marcel's : 12, 32-33, 52-53, 61, 122, 125, 131, 151, 175-176.  
life, (meaning of) : 6-7, 18, 20, 21, 34, 45, 51-52, 60, 86, 118-119, 136,  
145, 170, 174, 207, 210, 212, 238, 240, 242.  
light ("Light") : 15, 38, 50, 51, 55, 148, 157, 192, 214, 227.  
loss : 119, 131, 182, 200, 232.  
love : 19, 24, 34, 46, 65, 81, 88, 102, 112, 119, 122-123, 140, 150-151,  
159-164, 168, 181-182, 188, 190-191, 199, 207, 215, 233-234.  
Lubac, H. de : 113.  
Luijpen, W.A. : 35.

Macquarrie, J. : 78, 96.  
maieutic : 11, 62, 210.

- Maimonides : 78.  
 manicheism : 134, 152.  
 Maréchal, J. : 209.  
 Maritain, J. : 14, 31, 45, 64, 67, 93, 95, 97, 120, 130, 135, 220.  
 marriage : 144, 166.  
 martyr : 126, 138, 187-188, 195, 201.  
 Marx, K. : 43, 63; Marxism : 151.  
 Mauriac, F. : 16, 33.  
 Mascall, E.L. : 39, 70, 131, 210.  
 metaphysics : 7, 25, 39, 54, 57, 62, 68, 79, 87, 97, 104, 125, 138, 159,  
 164, 173, 179, 181, 191, 205, 208.  
 methodology, (Marcel's) : 12.  
 miracle : 33, 44, 90, 101, 104, 129-130.  
 modernism : 44-45, 63, 64.  
 Moeller, Ch. : 99.  
 Molière : 184.  
Monde cassé, le : 31, 69, 99, 134, 167, 225-226, 231.  
Mon Temps n'est pas le vôtre : 33, 99, 147, 185-186, 201, 231, 240.  
Mort de demain, le : 200, 232, 235.  
 Mozart, W.A. : 184.  
 Murry, J. Middleton : 179, 199.  
 mystery : 21, 25, 28, 57-58, 59-60, 61, 70, 71-72, 75, 79, 82, 134, 136,  
 141-142, 176, 177, 183, 210; see "ontological mystery".  
 Mystical Body : 67, 134, 160, 192-193, 196.  
 mysticism : 87, 101, 184, 212, 219.
- Natural theology : 11, 61, 89, 161, 163.  
 negative theology : 28-29, 40-41, 61.  
 neo-Socratic : 11.  
 Newman, J.H. : 133.  
 Nietzsche, F. : 47-48, 65, 76, 95, 153, 165, 175, 186.  
 nihilism : 33, 157, 181, 219.  
 noema-noesis : 97.  
 non-believer : 7, 16, 18, 74-75, 92, 113, 131.  
 Nygren, A. : 159, 172.
- Oath : 144.  
 obedience : 166.  
 objectification : 23, 58, 60, 66, 126, 133, 136, 145, 165, 183, 226.  
 objectivity : 57, 60, 98; -- and existence : 23, 36, 67, 75, 79, 98, 215.  
 O'Malley, J.B. : 68, 69, 97.

ontological mystery : 6, 21, 55, 62, 67, 84, 93, 99, 151, 181, 210.  
 ontological need : 6, 21, 25, 28, 55, 79-80, 82, 87, 90, 105, 110, 125,  
 140, 145, 151, 156, 168, 230-231.  
 ontological question, the : 58, 67, 86, 88, 97, 105-106, 145, 223-224, 226.  
 ontologism : 80, 217.  
 ontology : 19, 27, 28, 38-39, 55, 82, 93, 163, 175, 195.  
 opinion : 104, 131.  
 optimism : 171.  
 option, Marcel's : 6, 20, 22, 34, 174-175, 177, 184-185, 188, 195, 207-208,  
 242.  
 Orpheus and Eurydice (myth of) : 99, 191.  
 Otto, R. : 34.  
 Owen, H.P. : 58, 71

Palais de sable, le : 51, 66, 70, 99, 115-116, 122, 132, 135-136, 198.  
 Pamplume, L. : 97.  
 pantheism : 41, 58, 71, 89, 106, 117, 160, 218, 219, 222.  
 parenesis : 138.  
 participation : 13, 23-24, 26-27, 36, 40, 50, 54, 56, 67, 71, 77, 78, 87,  
 104, 106, 109, 115, 133, 141, 150, 159, 162, 165, 174, 195, 205,  
 214, 218, 222.  
 Pascal, B. : 100, 109-110.  
 patience : 143, 156-157.  
 Paul, Saint : 24, 45, 64, 70, 101-102, 134, 139, 153, 164-165, 167, 169,  
 172, 201, 222, 230, 242.  
 peace : 139, 159, 219.  
 Péguy, Ch. : 32.  
 personality : 50-51, 172.  
 pessimism : 114, 153.  
 Peter, Saint : 164.  
 phenomenology : 92, 94, 97, 103, 114, 132-133, 140, 154-155, 166-167, 176,  
 191.  
 philosophy : 17-25, 36, 44, 57, 61, 64, 89, 138, 163, 172, 180, 184, 195.  
 Plato : 15, 17, 30, 33, 35, 40, 155, 203, 212, 217.  
 "pleroma" : 7, 40, 107-108, 140, 161, 164, 189, 193, 195, 197-198.  
 Plotinus : 222.  
 Plutarch : 48.  
 Pontifex, M. : 94.  
 prayer : 34, 54, 56, 88, 90-91, 104, 123-125, 137, 160-161, 194, 233-234.  
 predestination : 129, 134, 165, 218.  
 presence : 7, 24, 38-39, 50, 66, 69, 71, 81-84, 85-86, 91, 98, 100, 120,  
 130, 140-141, 146, 150, 160, 170, 174, 183-184, 190, 195, 199,  
 208, 238



presential analogy : 81-84, 86-87, 207-208, 210.

prevenience : 87, 100.

pride : 64, 158.

Prini, P. : 97, 99.

problem : 21, 29, 46, 57-59, 70, 75, 131, 171, 176.

procreation : 20, 144, 166.

promise : 165.

"proofs" : 58, 74-76, 79, 83, 93, 94, 133, 208.

"prophetic assurance" : 161.

Prune et la prunelle, la : 198.

psychism : 132, 176.

Quatuor en fa dièse, le : 122, 172.

quietism : 66-67, 157, 161, 170.

Rationalism : 34, 93, 164.

realism : 93, 117, 209, 213.

reality : 23, 40, 61, 78, 106, 155, 168, 171.

recollection : 19, 27, 34, 55-56, 71.

Redemption : 59; see "salvation".

reflection : 6, 53-57, 62, 68, 70, 79, 93, 97, 109-110, 126, 128, 135-136, 169, 176, 194, 208, 215.

refusal : 22, 35, 74, 91, 105, 108, 152, 195.

Regard neuf, le : 99.

religion : 16, 18, 48-51, 57, 66-67, 88, 99, 104, 129-131, 138, 161, 188.

religious element in Marcel : 15, 59-62, 65, 70, 71, 84, 181, 208.

response : 20, 22, 50, 82, 86-88, 91, 105, 118, 122, 193, 210-211.

resurrection : 179, 190-192, 195, 202-203.

revelation : 53, 84, 89-90 (- and reason), 92, 101, 110, 191, 213-214, 220.

revolt : 157.

Ricoeur, P. : 12, 68.

Richmond, J. : 210.

Rilke, R.M. : 32, 39, 50, 197, 201.

Robinson, J.A.T. : 24, 66.

Rome n'est plus dans Rome : 32, 66, 98, 121, 166, 168, 171, 201, 202, 228-231, 240, 242.

Royce, J. : 36, 134, 145, 170, 205, 220.

"Sacral" : 18-20, 34, 60, 144, 174, 195, 207, 210.

sacrifice : 48, 188, 193, 228.

saint : 27, 56, 128, 193-195, 219, 224.

- salvation : 48, 129, 145, 161-162, 164, 190-194, 196, 203.
- Sartre, J.-P. : 17, 22, 30, 32, 35, 36, 48, 59, 63, 64, 65-66, 71, 76, 130, 140, 151, 168, 175, 177, 192, 199.
- Scheler, M. : 133.
- Schelling, F.W.M. : 202.
- science : 18, 44, 54, 57, 64, 112.
- secret : 59, 70.
- self : 29, 93, 136, 169; "moi" : 50, 86, 208.
- self-consciousness : 27, 80, 217.
- self-divinization : 17.
- sensation : 23, 36, 136, 199.
- service : 20, 34, 45, 195, 207.
- Shakespeare, W. : 34.
- Signe de la croix, le : 69, 97, 99, 148-149, 185, 231, 232, 234.
- sin : 31, 47, 48-49, 104, 108, 128, 203, 213-214.
- Smith, J.E. : 30, 33, 38, 77, 96.
- Socrates : 30, 72.
- Sottiaux, E. : 31, 102, 170, 239.
- soul : 24, 39, 45, 55, 64, 70, 80, 97, 105, 118-119, 124, 152-153, 156-157, 160, 167-168, 173, 179, 182, 189, 193, 197, 200, 226.
- and body relationship : 36, 37, 54, 212.
- Spencer, H. : 63.
- Spinoza, B. : 162.
- subjectivism : 60, 94, 117, 132.
- suffering : 34, 45, 104, 118-120, 130, 134, 218, 231-238.
- suicide : 128, 138, 152, 163, 168, 174, 186-187, 199.
- supernatural : 59.
- survival (of death) : 7, 174, 178, 180-181, 190, 191, 195, 202.
- Sweeney, L. : 60, 72, 95.
- syneidesis : 55, 69.
- systematization : 62, 205.
- Technolatry : 33, 46, 206, 219.
- technology : 18, 44, 45-46.
- Teilhard de Chardin, P. : 135.
- temptation : 104, 134, 152, 175, 188.
- test (of life) : 26, 118-119, 177, 240.
- Thales of Miletus : 65.
- theatre, Marcel's : 12-15, 31, 192, 223-238.
- theism : 34, 63, 207.
- theocentrism : 6-7, 34, 43, 158-159, 163, 197, 206-207, 209, 211.
- theodicy : 95, 118-120, 133-134, 218.

- theology (and Marcel) : 6, 57, 59, 77, 89, 104, 107, 109, 110, 128, 153,  
 158, 163-164, 172, 174, 180, 192, 195, 211.  
 Thomism : 14, 57, 64, 67, 68, 76, 83, 93, 95, 181, 209, 213.  
 thou : 110, 143, 147; see "communion", "I-thou relationships".  
 thought : 53-54, 93, 101, 117.  
 Tillich, P. : 34, 37, 64, 96, 122, 136, 157, 198, 200, 221.  
 transcendence : 5, 24, 25, 28, 37-38, 67, 72, 75, 90, 105, 117, 133, 141,  
 151-152, 154, 159, 168, 177, 180, 196, 209.  
 Trethowan, I. : 194.  
 Troisfontaines, R. : 25, 30, 35, 37, 69, 93, 102, 202.  
 truth : 191-192; see "God as Truth".
- Understanding : 116.  
 uneasiness : 17, 104, 170, 216-217.  
 "Universal" : 25, 47, 129.  
 universalism : 65.  
 universality : 38, 65.  
 unverifiability : 53, 60, 104, 112, 129.
- Value : 17, 19, 20, 64, 65, 100, 115, 182, 188, 191, 208.  
 van Buren, M. : 65.  
 Verneaux, R. : 60, 61, 72, 101.  
 verification : 98, 112, 114.  
voeu créateur : 144-145, 158, 210.  
 voluntarism : 105, 116, 126, 132, 191.
- Wahl, J. : 37.  
 Weber, M. : 170.  
 Whitehead, A.N. : 40, 63.  
 Widmer, Ch. : 98, 206, 209.  
 will : 104-106, 116-117, 127, 213.  
 wisdom : 62, 72, 219.  
 Wisdom, J. : 130.  
 witness : 125-126, 139-141, 162-164, 165-166, 188, 193.  
 Wittgenstein, L. : 25, 38.  
 wonder : 39.  
 Wust, P. : 166.